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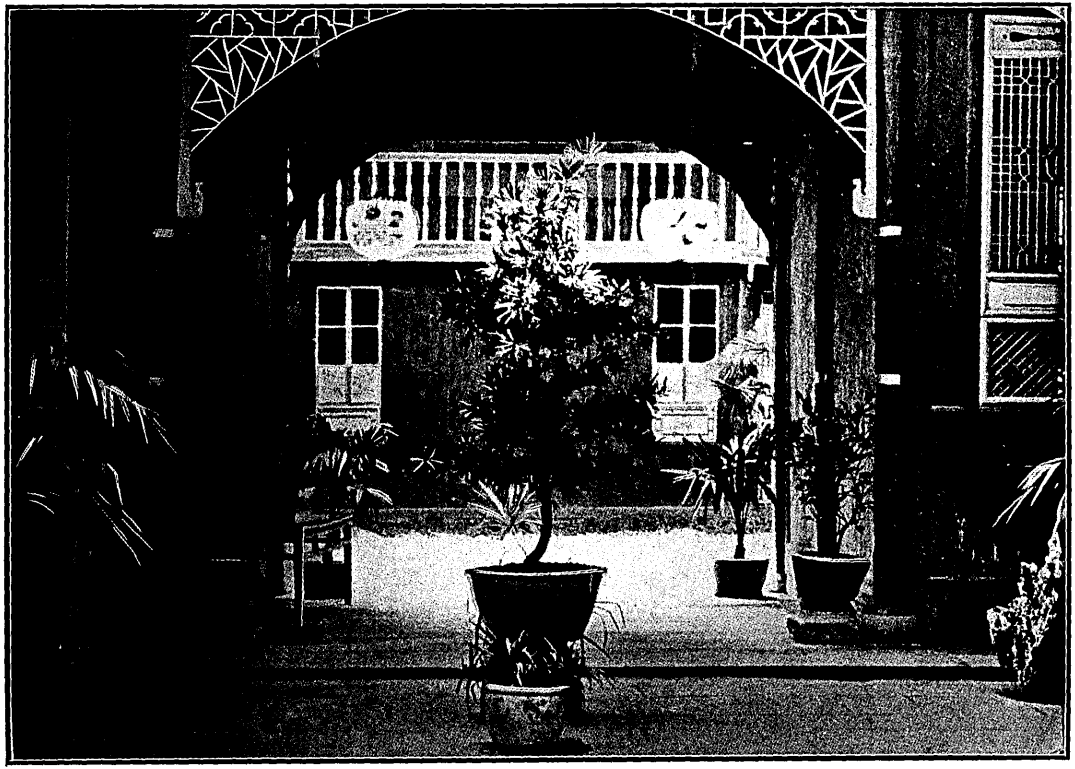

Court Yard of the Gospel Hall at Chang Teh

From Opium Fiend to Preacher

THE STORY OF CHENG TING CHIAH

By

A. P. QUIRMBACH

For ten years a Missionary
in China

Illustrated

First Edition of Ten Thousand

Published by
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY, Limited
Toronto

FOR

The Young People's Forward Movement for Missions
F. C. STEPHENSON, Secretary
Methodist Mission Rooms, Toronto, Ont.

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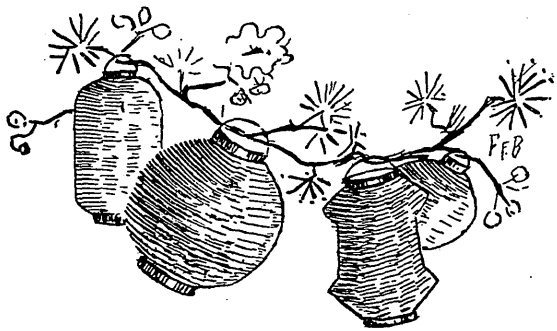
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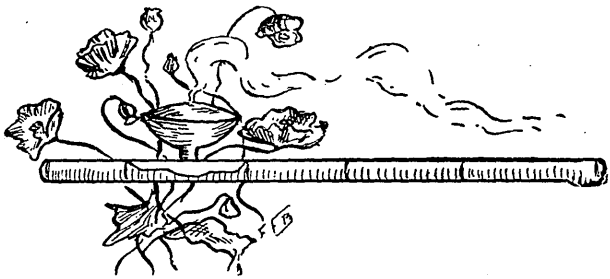


INTRODUCTION

THIS simple story of the grace of God in the life of Cheng should be scattered by the thousand among our people. It will create not only faith in the work of Missions in China but what is more, faith in the gospel everywhere. It will be a message of hope and salvation to many a poor victim of sin in our own land, as well as a stimulus to Christian hearts to send the gospel to China. It was in the presence of such facts as are here depicted that Paul exclaimed "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek," (to us first and also to the Chinese). It is no mean result of our missionary work that it thus comes back to us to refresh our own faith, giving us living proof and vivid conception of the wonderful power of the old gospel of Christ's love.

N. BURWASH

VICTORIA COLLEGE, TORONTO.

FOREWORD

THE story, with its unaffected simplicity of style, its unconstrained and circumstantial narrative, is one which bears the ear marks of truth and fact in every part.

I seemed when reading to be back in China, and living over again the life I lived when there. This unpretentious book deserves a wide circulation. Wherever it is thoughtfully read it will stiffen confidence in the old doctrines of our faith, and stimulate in a wholesome way, missionary interest and activity.

It is a message to our day. William Arthur said, half a century ago: "In this age of faith in the natural, and disinclination to the supernatural, we want especially to meet the whole world with this credo:—'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'" With no less emphasis does this timely word from the "Tongue of Fire" require to be repeated in our day. This story then is a "voice" to our time. We believe it warrantable and reverend to paraphrase and adapt the language of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:4) and say "It is not by enticing words of man's wisdom" that this story grips our hearts, but the miracle of which Cheng, the erstwhile idolatrous opium slave, was transformed into an earnest and successful preacher of the gospel, is a miracle of grace and is "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

A. B. WINCHESTER

PASTOR, KNOX CHURCH, TORONTO

From Opium Fiend to Preacher

The Story of Cheng Ting Chiah

I.

How the Yang-tse Deserted Shi-Shou

HUNDREDS of miles up the Yang-tse, in the province of Hupeh, just below Sunday Island, three tall peaks rise trident-like above the thickly peopled plain. Twenty years ago a wealthy city lay snugly at the mountain's base. It bore the name of Shi-Shou, which in English means Rock Head.

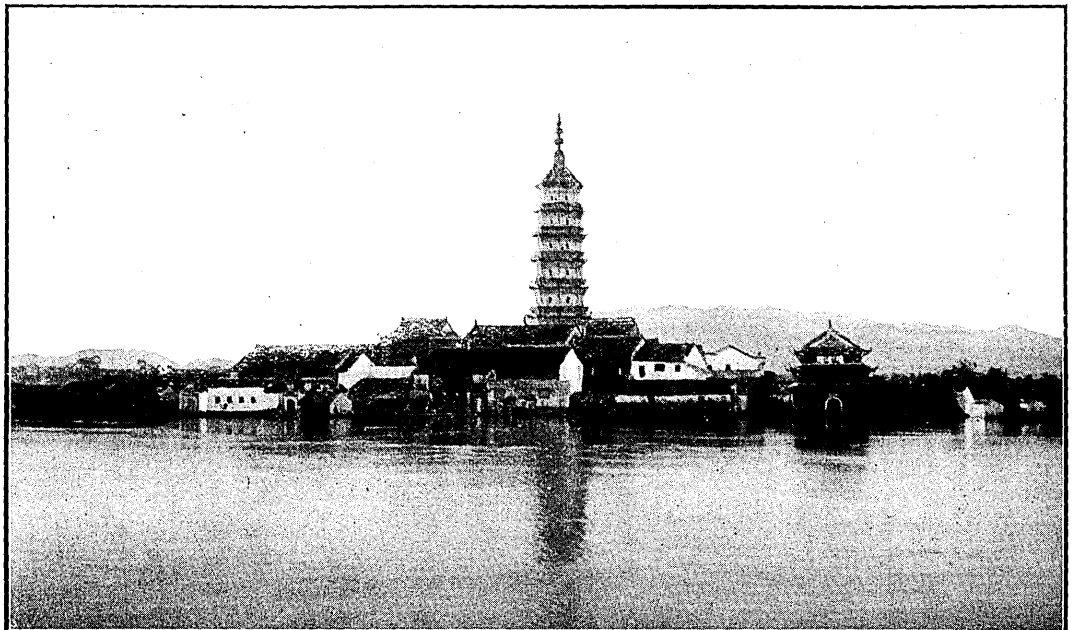
Like a dragon coiled protectingly around the city and bounding the plain to the

west, stretched a huge dike, high and broad, called the Dike of Yellow Gold. Beside it flowed the mighty Yang-tse, bearing to the very doors of the citizens a multitudinous commerce.

Upon it was built the main street of Shi-Shou, the Street of Yellow Gold, with its double line of gay shops. resplendent with gilded carvings of the dragon, the lion, the phoenix and the bat, and filled with a busy populace, crowding its narrow limits and absorbed earnestly and constantly in its lucrative trade.

People and priest, shop and sanctuary, alike prospered. Magnificent were the city's many temples to Buddha and the gods, for the overflow of its wealth had been lavished on abbeys and abbey lands. Like a watch tower, the temple on the sacred southern peak reared its lofty head toward heaven, and under its protection the citizens felt assured of continued blessing and prosperity.

Was it that the spirit of the mighty river was jealous of the gorgeous shrines of the spirits of the land, or had not been sufficiently propitiated because both priest and people were too busy in pursuit of riches,



The Yang-Tse in Flood Gan King

that one dreadful day the Yang-tse leaped its banks, flooded all the land around, and swept away as with the very besom of destruction the city's wealth? Eagerly its terrified inhabitants sought a way of escape from the whelming waters; humbly they essayed to appease the river spirit's wrath. But all was of no avail.

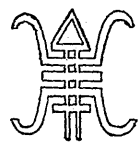
Whether or not the gongs were beaten too loudly and the prayers chanted at too great length, whether or not the fumes of sacred incense and the reports of the "hsi pao," the votive fire-works, failed to reach to heaven, they could not say. Certain it is that gong and chant, incense stick and firecracker, were alike ineffectual. When at last the waters receded from the flooded district, it was found that the Yang-tse had forsaken its ancient channel beside the city and had formed another three miles away.

No more its teeming commerce crowded the wharves by the great dike with the curious merchandise of Cathay. No more the wealth with which it had long dowered the citizens of Shi-Shou flowed down the Street of Yellow Gold. The names remained, the gold was gone. The once fertile

plain no longer yielded luxuriant crops to happy harvesters; it became instead "the region of the Nine Lakes," and fishermen exploited wide waters covering fields whence farmers had once reaped golden grain.

The city, left far inland by the river, went rapidly to decay. Poverty took the place of opulence, desolation lay upon mart and shrine. Grass grew in the market places, dust and dinginess held possession of the deserted shops. The temples were in ruins and the priests in rags. Everywhere was shown but the wreck of former prosperity, so sadly had the glory departed and the fine gold become dim.

The early story of the subject of this narrative finds striking analogy in the story of the city of his birth.

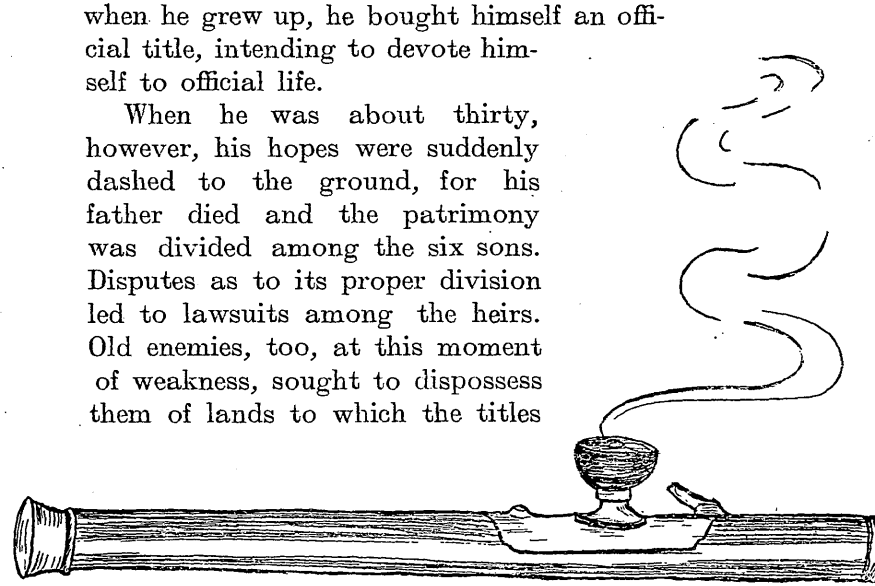


II.

A Chinese Prodigal

CHENG TING CHIAH came of official family, at one time the richest in the District of Shi-Shou. His father was a great land-owner, possessing, to use a Chinese phrase, "wan pa tien," about ten thousand acres. Consequently Cheng grew up in luxury, dressed customarily in silks and satins, was well educated in the Chinese classics, and even attended the great examinations in the capital of the province. Later, when he grew up, he bought himself an official title, intending to devote himself to official life.

When he was about thirty, however, his hopes were suddenly dashed to the ground, for his father died and the patrimony was divided among the six sons. Disputes as to its proper division led to lawsuits among the heirs. Old enemies, too, at this moment of weakness, sought to dispossess them of lands to which the titles



were not quite clear. Thus the greater part of his estate was swallowed up in court expenses, and Cheng finding it impossible to gratify his ambition to be an official, decided to go into business.

But his family had long been renowned as defenders of the poor; and Cheng, now the head of his clan, was true to the family characteristics and became their constant champion, fighting their battles in the courts and otherwise befriending them, at no little cost in money and friendship. Often, too, he would be sought after to settle disputes out of court. His strong reasoning powers and the ability he subsequently displayed to make men think as he thought, were developed here.

Over the table with tea and sweets before them, the leading men of the city would meet him to settle some difficulty that had arisen. Tea, feasts, opium, wine, tobacco, and sweets, made up the never ending round of this period of his experience. This sort of life, however, unfitted him for business, as did indeed his official bringing up and his student tastes. The successful business man must keep before him the proverb, "Ho ch'i

seng ts'ai," which means, "The agreeable spirit begets wealth." His breeding had been that of a ruler, and agreeableness in those days was far from him.

Heavy reverses came. Life went hard with him. Sorrow after sorrow befell him and loss after loss. His wife died and all his children. Most of his money was swept away. Disease fastened itself upon his body. Hope failed and prospects became black as night.

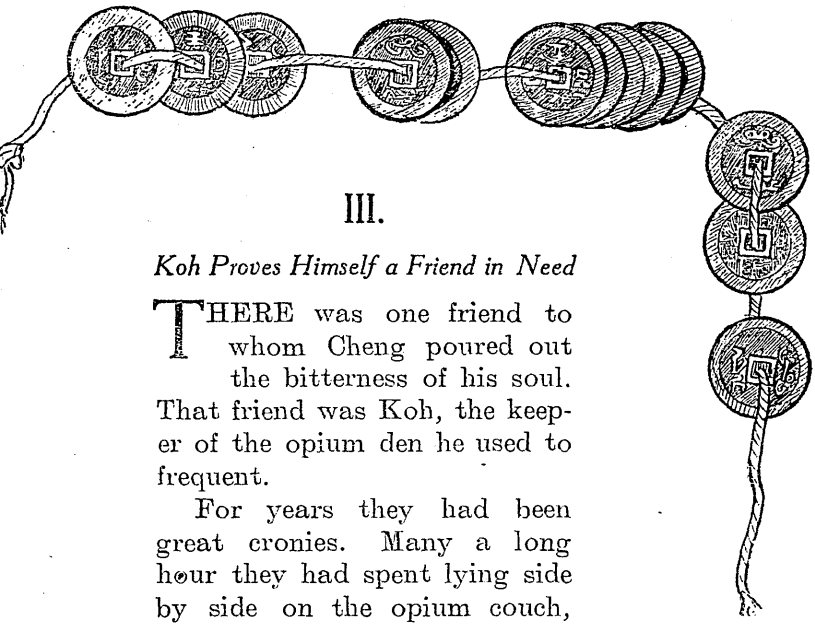
As a young official, he had, among other bad habits, become addicted to the use of opium ; and now, brooding over his misery and seeking relief from his pain, the habit fixed itself more firmly and fatally upon him. The appetite became insatiable.

Opium he must have, and to earn money to get it he began pettifogging in the courts, pleading causes not now for chivalry, but for money, and with some success.

It was a bitter, lonely life. He was a wreck of his former self—this broken-down, half-blind, decayed gentleman—earning a pittance by the use of his powers of mind and speech that he might buy a pipeful of

opium and forget his sorrows in its dire intoxication.

He once said to me of those years, "I was eating the husks then. I used to wonder why I was so unlucky. What had I done to bring on all this suffering? Had I offended my ancestors? Had I made a wrong choice for my grandmother's grave? Perhaps fate had decreed that these sorrowful years should come upon me. And then I asked, what shall I do? Shall I take vegetarian vows, and, turning my back on the pleasures of the world, seek thus to procure a return of prosperity, or at least of health? Or shall I kill myself? What shall I do?"



III.

Koh Proves Himself a Friend in Need

THERE was one friend to whom Cheng poured out the bitterness of his soul. That friend was Koh, the keeper of the opium den he used to frequent.

For years they had been great cronies. Many a long hour they had spent lying side by side on the opium couch, smoking and gossiping as opium smokers do, filling each other's pipes, and hob-nobbing in dreamy languor as the subtle intoxication of the drug settled down upon them. They knew and trusted each other, these friends—knew and trusted each other well. And so to the keeper of the opium den, Cheng confided the story of his distresses and perplexities. Again and again he went over the ground, every day in deeper despair. "What shall I do?" he

said one night. "Shall I commit suicide—or would it be worth while to become a vegetarian? Perhaps it would help."

Koh listened earnestly but hardly answered a word, except to say as his poor perplexed friend suggested one by one the expedients he had thought of, "Don't do that" or "Don't go into that."

Night after night Cheng took up his sad story and asked ever more anxiously, "What am I to do?"

Koh listened as before, and at length said softly, "I've got a road for you to take."

"What is it?" said Cheng, eagerly.

Koh replied, "I am afraid to tell you. I am afraid you would not like it." And for weeks that was all he would say.

Finally one night Cheng said to him, "We are old friends; you know me and the misery I am in, you believe you know something that would help me. You say you have a road for me to take, what is it?"

Koh answered, "I'll tell you. It is the Gospel Hall."

At the word Cheng jumped up excitedly and threw down his pipe. "The Gospel

Hall !" he shouted in amazed tones. His pride still flamed within him, the very spirit which prompted the old-time cry, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?"

Koh answered quietly, "Didn't I tell you you would not like it ? But I know it is true, that's the road for you."

"Why, they are no better themselves at the Hall !" exclaimed Cheng.

There was, alas, at that time some reason for the remark, for a clique of evil men swayed the seldom visited church at Shi-Shou, and the truth was "held down in unrighteousness."

"There is bad management there, I know," replied Koh. "But the gospel is all right. See here, next Sunday the missionary visits Shi-Shou. Will you go and hear him ?"

Calmed down and soothed by another pipe of opium, Cheng finally consented. "Well," he said, "we'll go and take a back seat and hear the foreigner."

Meantime the two conversed about this new Way, Koh explaining it as well as he could and in a measure preparing Cheng for the message of the Sabbath.

Picture them there. The long, low, dark room, its air heavy with the fumes of opium, a passage-way down its centre, and on either side running lengthwise a high, wide platform. On these the smokers, lying back on dingy cushions, their feet towards the centre aisle, a tray between every two with a lighted lamp, to the tiny flame of which they hold the opium pipes as they inhale the seductive narcotic. Was ever a more unlikely inquiry room ?

* * * * * * *

On the following Sunday morning this strange pair, the opium smoker and the opium den keeper who had become to him in that dark chamber of indulgence a veritable messenger of the Cross, sat side by side on the back bench of the Gospel Hall, and listened to the missionary as he spoke in his Master's name.

The first message that Cheng heard from the Word of God was strikingly appropriate to his case, and appealed to him at once. It was on the text, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

"Oh !" he said to himself, "I know the fact that sin abounds ; I know that by my

own experience, but grace is something new." The Chinese word for sin means not only transgression but punishment for transgression; and Cheng had had an unusual experience of both meanings. But what did this grace that "abounded much more" mean? Koh had said there was a road. Was this it?

The evening found them there again, and the evening text was, "The wages of sin is death."

"Ah!" said Cheng to himself, "that is true enough. It has been death to me, death to my patrimony, death to my wife and family. Look at me; I am dead. My hopes in life are dead."

Later he discussed the preaching with Koh. This strange story that seemed too good to be true was fastening itself upon him. Hope had been aroused and faith was being born.

"There does seem to be a way, there does seem to be a way," he said. And so they began to go regularly to the Gospel Hall.

Koh's interest, too, grew more rapidly from this time. Both Cheng and he held

themselves aloof from the local authorities of the church, however, and for several years would just attend the preaching services, and then go away alone. The service over, they would meander back to the opium den for mutual comfort — and more opium. Sometimes they got little or nothing out of the sermon, but one or the other would say, "The text was good, and the chapter." Then, over the pipe, they would fall to discussing the real meaning as they understood it.

At length Koh applied in person to the missionary and begged for baptism. "No," said the missionary, "you are an opium user, you cannot be baptized, you must break it off first."

The poor fellow goes home determined to break it off. Soon the agonies that come when the use of opium is abandoned begin to distress him. Finally dysentery sets in. That, if it persists, is a fatal symptom ; and so he yields to the persuasion of friends and again takes a little opium to save his life. He is restored, to be sure, but now the craving is worse than ever.

Six months later the missionary came

again and Koh once more pleaded importunately for baptism.

"Philip baptized the eunuch when he believed with all his heart," he urged. "I believe on Christ with all my heart, why cannot I be baptized?"

"What about the opium?" asked the missionary. "Have you left it off?"

"I did all but break it off," he said, "and dysentery came on me and I took it up again."

He pleaded and pleaded and almost quarrelled with the missionary in his eagerness to receive the sacred symbol of entrance into Christ's church. Had he not done his utmost? There were no hospitals near, no help of any kind.

"I cannot receive you into the church while you take opium," said the missionary. "It is impossible."

How could he know the depth of this man's sincerity? Besides, the use of opium could not in the least be tolerated. So he tested Koh in the following way: "If you try faithfully to break off and die in the effort, would not heaven be yours and God pleased to receive you?"

These words went far more deeply into his hearer's soul than the missionary knew. Again Koh went home ; again he broke off opium ; again the fatal dysentery came on ; again his friends begged him to take opium to save his life, and finally endeavored to force it into his mouth.

"No," he said, "I will not take it even to save my life. I have the word of the missionary that God will be pleased with me since I have done my best to break it off. If I die, it will be home for me."

And so, despite the urgency of his friends, he absolutely refused to take opium and died. Koh the opium den keeper became Koh the martyr. Who doubts that God received him ?

IV.

From Opium Den to Church—and Back

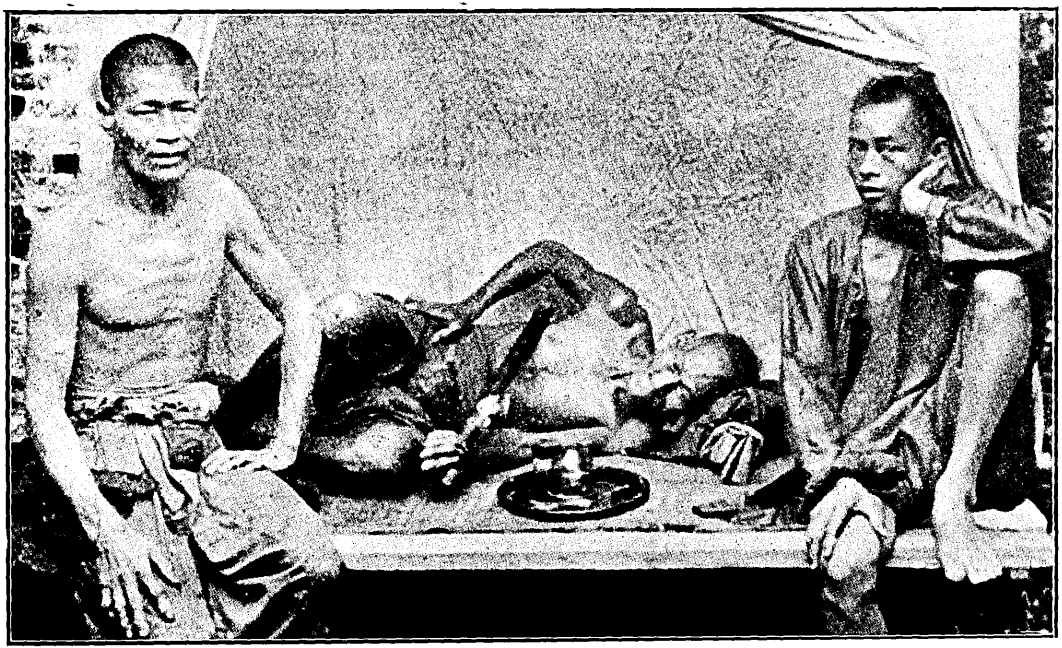
NO one mourned his death more than Cheng. Koh had been his old friend and companion for years, and had led him to his first knowledge and thought of the truth.

About this time he also applies for baptism, but he is still an opium user and can not be admitted to church membership. Again and again he tries to break it off. But again and again, when almost successful, some one or other of the many diseases with which he is afflicted comes upon him, and though while ill there is no craving for the drug, in the weakness of partial recovery he yields to the longing for stimulant, and comes once more hopelessly under its influence. Meanwhile he grows poorer and poorer, too poor

and too much occupied with disease and opium to have regard for dress, unable even to be cleanly. At the age of fifty he presents a sorry sight, indeed.

During these days of great weakness, the matter of attending church was not an easy one. The church was three miles away from his country home, but every Sunday morning, rain or shine, he would take his staff and wend his way wearily thither, passing through the paddy fields on to the great dike and the Street of Yellow Gold.

By this time faint and exhausted, he would drop into the first opium den he passed and satisfy his craving with many pipes, until the stimulus from the opium would enable him to continue his journey. Carefully he would then pick his way along the crowded streets, now brushed aside by coolies carrying their loads, now jostled by the sedan chair and retinue of some passing official, until he arrived near the church. Once more, his energy exhausted, he would enter an opium den and once more stimulate his failing strength. When again the appetite was satisfied, he would hobble into the church. Often he would be wet and



Opium Fiends

cold, and splashed with mud from stumbling into the many holes in the road.

Years after, some of the members described his condition at that time and told me how much they had resented his coming, especially as he was so weak and ailing. They said, "Often have we seen Mr. Cheng lying on the broad benches of the church in the chills and high fever of malaria, the consumptive cough racking his wasted frame, and together with his suppressed groans, disturbing the service. Sometimes we used to say to him, 'Mr. Cheng, had you not better go home? Your illness is so extreme we are afraid you will die here in the church.' "

Under such conditions did poor Cheng persevere in his endeavor to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ. Was ever a more pathetic picture presented than that of this suffering man, stimulating himself with opium to get strength to creep painfully to the place where he could hear the sound of the gospel and find the way to the Cross!

In this condition I first met him. One morning as I was sitting in the church, some one brought him to me and said, "This is

the second son of the official family of Cheng."

I looked at him, a poor, decrepit, shuffling creature, so full of sores that his sleeves were low over his hands to hide them as much as possible—unkempt, unshaven, and disreputable looking. Could this be a man of official family? He certainly did not look like it. I entered into conversation with him, however, and he told me some of the circumstances of his life. As soon as he began to speak, I said to myself, That is the language of an educated man; and while there was no dignity in his appearance, in his speech there was ample evidence that he had belonged to the gentry.

He wanted to be a Christian, he wanted to learn the doctrine and desired to buy a large print Testament. I suspected he was an opium victim and asked him if he used the drug. A friend who was with him said, "He only takes a couple of pills every day." This is an expression opium users have when they desire to break it off and have not been successful. It implies that there is little craving left.

I said, "If so little as that, wait until I come back in the fall and I will take you over to the hospital at Chang-Teh, and though you are so weak the good doctor there can do something for you."

The poor fellow jumped at my offer with eagerness and gratitude.

"All right, then," said I. "In six months if you will come with me, we will do our best." Meantime I counselled prayer and study of the Word.

It was six months before I saw him again. During the summer he had been very ill and he told me it was really the hope of what I had promised that had kept him alive at all. When with the October days I came again to Shi-Shou he hobbled along to the church to see me.

"Oh !" said I, "you are the old man that I promised to take to the hospital."

He was surprised to find that I recognized him so readily, and delighted that I had not forgotten my promise. I made arrangements with him that on a certain day he was to meet me at Lao Shan Tsui, about three miles away on a branch of the Yang-tse flowing south. There he was to come

on board my small hired junk, and I would take him to Chang-Teh, to the hospital of the Presbyterian Mission. I told him when to come, and that he was to be there and be prompt.

Meantime I visited him at his home. All that was left him was permission to live with his nephew, a simple countryman who was also enquiring the Way. A thatched roof; a three-roomed house filled up with rude agricultural implements; a grain bin of bamboo in the corner of the only room that was not a bedroom—such was his home. This central room served at once as a store for rice and as a kitchen; an extra chair or two showed that it was also the guest room.

Here, after chasing out the ubiquitous pig and chicken, we chatted, sipped tea, sang several hymns and had prayer together. I began to feel that there was in this man a response which showed more than mere interest. Was it a spark of spiritual life I was detecting? I determined to do all I could to fan it into flame. There turned out to be in him, as the sequel

shows, a far deeper work of grace than I then thought possible.

But I little knew him then. I had met him but a few times, and could give him but a few minutes at a time, for our enquirers were many, and such was the strange mixture of humility and pride in him that it was hard to get to know him, to find out where he really was.

When the time came I looked for him at the place of appointment, but there was no sign of Cheng. I waited as long as I could, and then left to go ten miles further down the river, where there was an important out-station that demanded some attention. I left word at Lao Shan Tsui that if he were to come they could tell him I would be occupied for some hours at the out-station and he might meet me there. I spent half a day finishing up my duties, but there was still no sign of Cheng.

I had given him up, had boarded my boat, and was almost under way in my passage down the river, when a sampan came in sight, and in it old Cheng, shouting and gesticulating wildly in the hope of at-

tracting my attention. So I received him into my boat, and we started.

He told me how it was he had been delayed. Early in the morning of the day appointed he had got ready, but he required three or four dollars in copper cash for his expenses by the way, and begged his nephew who had in charge his few piculs of rice, to give him the money. The clan, however, objected to his leaving and his nephew refused to give him the cash.

Earnestly they expostulated: "Er-tie," (second father—his clan designation—for he was the second son and now advanced in years), "why at your time of life do you go so far from home and you not at all well and strong?"

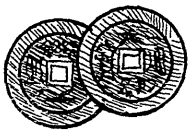
In vain he explained that the pastor had promised to help him break off his opium, that he might be baptized. They had no heart to appreciate such explanations.

"Er-tie, how many years more would you smoke, anyway? And won't we provide you with what opium you want? Why should you risk so much and suffer so, while perhaps you may not be able to break it off after all?"

"Give me my money and let me go—the pastor is waiting. Why do you delay the pastor?" pleaded Cheng. He was indeed anxious. It seemed his last chance. He dared not miss it.

"But, Er-tie, how do you know what it will be like away over there at Chang-Teh? Have we not heard strange stories of what they do in those hospitals? And what if you were to die away from home?" Thus they assailed him at all points where a Chinese is especially vulnerable.

But Cheng, in desperation, when he could brook no further delay, cried out: "Money or no money, I'm off," and his nephew followed this strange uncle, with the money—thirty or forty pounds weight of copper cash at one end of the pole over his shoulder and the old man's scant bundle of baggage and bedding at the other.



先苦後甜

First the bitter, then the sweet.

苦退甜來

Bitter ended, sweet comes.

受得苦中苦

Patient endurance of trouble upon trouble

方為人上人

will make you a man among men.

人老心不老

Though a man grow old in years, his heart may remain young ;

家窮行不窮

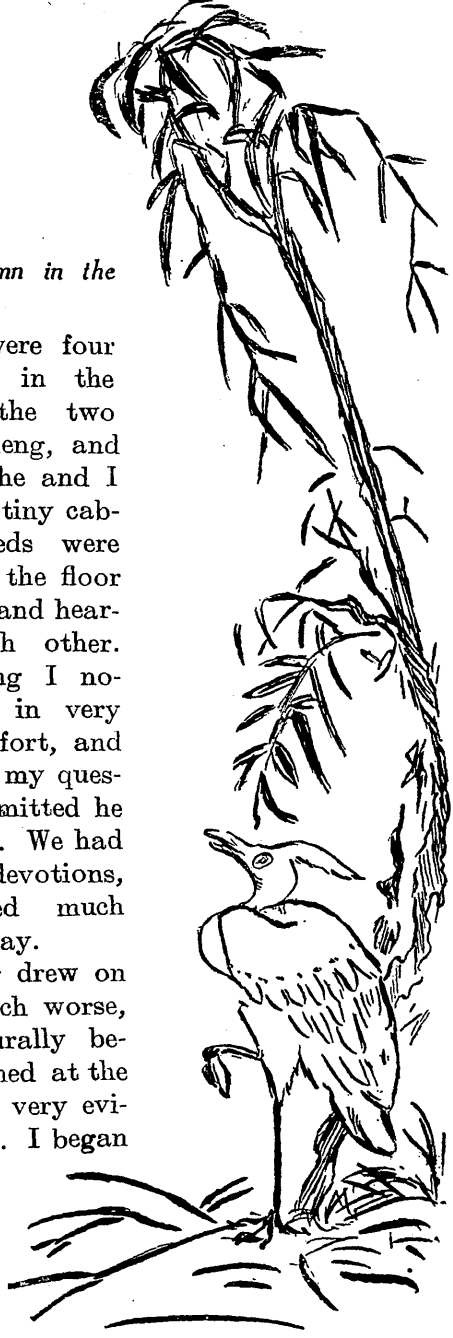
though he be poor, his conduct may be noble.

V.

The Only Hymn in the Book

THERE were four of us in the boat, the two boatmen, Cheng, and myself, and he and I occupied the tiny cabin. Our beds were made up on the floor within sight and hearing of each other. Next morning I noticed he was in very great discomfort, and in answer to my questions he admitted he was not well. We had morning devotions, and chatted much during the day.

As evening drew on he grew much worse, and I naturally became concerned at the sight of his very evident distress. I began



to question him as to the amount of opium he had been in the habit of taking every day.

"Chi hoh—a few vials"—was his reply.

"But how many ?" I insisted.

"Pah hoh—eight vials"—he said—half an ounce or thereabout.

I was frightened. "Eight vials !" I exclaimed. "Why, I was told you were only taking a pill or two."

"That was not correct," he said. "My friends understated the amount out of kindness to me. I was always taking as much as this."

Then I began to realize what I was in for. Here was a heavy opium-smoker, breaking off wholly from that large quantity, a shattered wreck to begin with, and now suffering terribly from the sudden stopping of the drug ; and here was I, without special medical skill and without medicines, alone with a man who I felt might die before we could reach the hospital. He had some opium pills with him, I found, but the other drugs mixed with it made him so ill that after the first day he could not take them.

House Boat

Crowded River Craft

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As the night came on he was always much worse, of course, for night is the time in which opium is usually smoked and when its victim most feels the craving. His cough and expectoration alarmed me greatly. Never had I heard such sustained and violent coughing, and at times the mucus seemed to choke him. On questioning him closely he said there was much pain in his limbs and at his heart. The fever consumed him.

The whole night long one could hear him groaning, though without one word of complaint or regret, and in the midst of his suffering he would appear to challenge the Almighty to rescue him from his condition. "Lord, you must help me ; Lord, you must help me," he would say ; and his simple faith seemed to lay hold upon the divine arm with a grip that refused to let go. I did not sleep much myself under such conditions, of course.

In the morning he was so exhausted that it seemed as if he must sink from utter weakness and stupor, and in order to arouse him, I called out "Cheng, Cheng, let us sing something."

With the Chinese grunt of assent, and

clearing his throat with a great choking effort, he said, "Oh yes, let us sing."

"What shall we sing, then ?" I asked as I helped him sit up.

"Teacher, there is only one hymn in the book, the one hundred and thirty-fifth :

O su rih wei tsui ren,
Puh ming peh Chu en ;

besides, I know it by heart, and my eyes are so dim I could not use a book."

The beautiful hymn of the poor sufferer's eager choice is a great favorite with our congregations in China. The air is, I believe, originally Chinese, and the language, idiomatic, strong and wonderfully concise and expressive. Many a time have I heard a Chinese congregation singing it with intense enthusiasm and delight, keeping time to the ringing melody with swaying bodies and stamping feet. A literal translation of it has been versified by a friend in Canada as follows :

I once was a sinner who cared not for God,
I feared not life's danger, I felt not sin's load ;
Friends round me rejoiced in the light of His face,

I blindly despised Him, the Lord of all
Grace.

But God in great mercy my darkness made
light,
I saw His law's sternness and quailed at the
sight ;
In plans of self-succour no hope could I base,
Only Jesus could save me, my Lord of all
Grace.

At the name of my Saviour, as perfume
most sweet,
At once my fears vanish, my peace is com-
plete ;
Rejoicing, I feast in His banqueting place,
What return can I make Him, my Lord of
all Grace ?

My treasure most rich is the grace of my
Lord,
Oh, how can I perish who trust in His
word ?
Midst life's storm and struggle, Christ's arm
shall embrace ;
My sun and shield ever, the Lord of all
Grace.

When I cross the dark valley and yield up
my breath,

Christ's name shall inspire me to triumph
o'er death ;
I shall rise, when He calls, from earth's quiet
sleeping place,
And behold Him forever, my Lord of all
Grace !

I believe that hymn largely helped to keep Cheng alive. Its effect upon him was wonderful. Again and again he would call for it. Every day, and generally two or three times a day, one or the other of us would begin it, then both taking up the strain, its simple yet striking melody would echo over the waters of the river. Our stolid boatmen came to recognize and join in the air, and in junks and other quaint river craft near by, men would lift their heads and listen, as the unwonted strain and words of the Christian hymn fell upon their ears.

How vividly the picture comes before me ! I can see Cheng sitting up in bed—for weak as he was he could not be happy when singing to his divine Lord unless his attitude was worshipful — his head almost touching the low mat covering of the cabin.

Under him is his ragged bedding, one end carelessly thrown over his feet, to hide and keep them warm. His shabby garments are folded loosely over his attenuated form, and his hands brought reverently together in his lap.

His voice, at first weak and tremulous, quickly increases in strength and volume, and finally rings out in surprisingly vigorous tones of exultation and triumph, as the hymn describes the Christian course from conviction of sin to reception into glory. The poor fellow's body is indeed in the bondage of pain, but his spirit free in the love of his Lord.

The first verse stirs memories of his long life of sin, the physical consequences of which now so sadly distress him.

"I blindly despised Him, the Lord of all Grace."

Sadly he sings these words. In what supreme contempt he had held this foreign religion. Had any one but his friend Koh first spoken to him of Jesus, how he would have turned upon and reviled him !

"But God in great mercy my darkness made light."

His voice breaks as if under the thought of the unspeakable goodness that had sought him out even in the depths of an opium den. The light had come to him amidst clouds of opium smoke over the soothing pipe, which, alas, had kept him a helpless slave all these long years between. The law's sternness, the hopelessness of self-succour, full well he realizes it; and there in my boat, fast in the toils of disease and opium appetite, he sings, as with a faith that will not let go,

"Only Jesus could save me, the Lord of all Grace."

At the third verse, which expresses the sweetness of fellowship with a living, loving, personal Saviour, as he sings the line—

"Rejoicing, I feast in His banqueting place," the very light of God shines on the haggard face, and the man's body sways with emotion. If he lives, it is Christ and freedom from opium; if he dies it is to be with Christ, and far better than earth's best.

"My treasure most rich is the grace of my
Lord,"

he sings. Earth's treasures have long failed him; yet this infinitely surpasses all he once possessed. How can he perish with such a divine Friend? With utter abandon he pours out his soul in the lines:

"Midst life's storm and struggle, Christ's
arm shall embrace;
My sun and shield ever, the Lord of all
Grace."

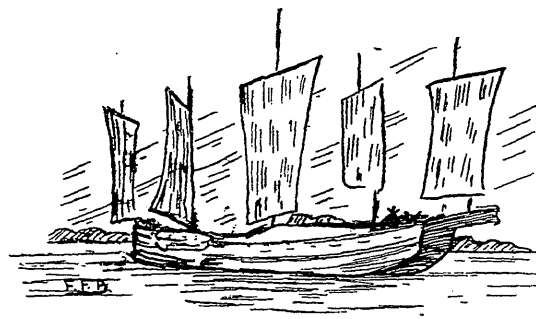
At this point he no longer looks the helpless heap I lifted into a sitting posture a few moments before. The joy-filled soul is now supreme over the pain-racked body.

In solemn but quietly assured tones, he sings of crossing the dark valley. In the very moment of death the sound of Christ's name shall revive his soul and give him triumph. His body shall but sleep quietly in the grave till the resurrection morning. The highest heaven, the abode of Jesus, is to be his home. With ecstatic delight he sings the final line of the hymn:

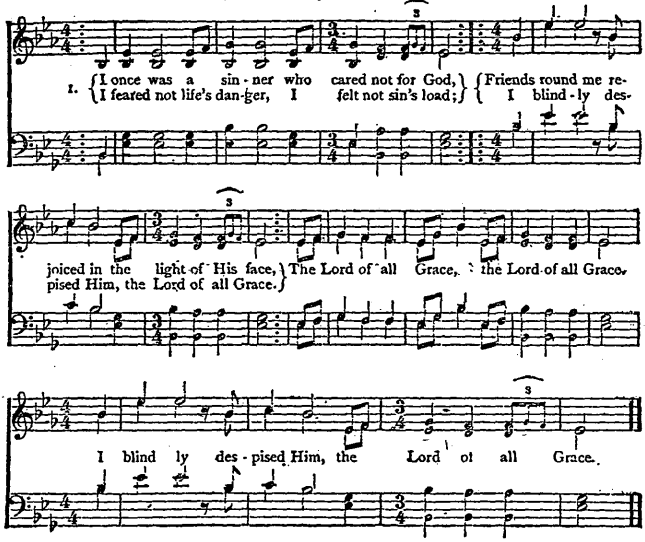
"And behold Him for ever, my Lord of all
Grace."

Over and over he sings it, as though

loth to descend from the height of his soul's rapture to the misery in which his body is bound. To be in the presence of Christ, his "Grace-Lord," through the eternities, sinless, painless, glorified with Him—the earnest of that inheritance is already in his heart. Present weakness and distress are lost in the fulness of the beatific vision, and turning to me, he exclaims in tones full of holy joy, "Oh teacher, there is not a pain or an ache left !"



The Lord of all Grace.

Chinese air, harmonized by A. E. Mansfield, Mus. Bac.

But God in great mercy my darkness made light,
I saw His law's sternness and quailed at the sight;
In plans of self succour no hope could I base,
Only Jesus could save me, my Lord of all Grace. Repeat

At the name of my Saviour, as perfume most sweet,
At once my fears vanish, my peace is complete;
Rejoicing I feast in His banqueting place,
What return can I make Him, my Lord of all Grace? Repeat

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When I cross the dark valley and yield up my breath,
Christ's name shall inspire me to triumph o'er death;
I shall rise, when He calls, from earth's quiet sleeping place,
And behold Him forever, my Lord of all Grace. Repeat

衙門八字開

The yamen doors stand wide open;

有理無錢莫進來

though in the right, do not enter without money.

年年防饑饉

Guard against famine every year;

夜夜防盜

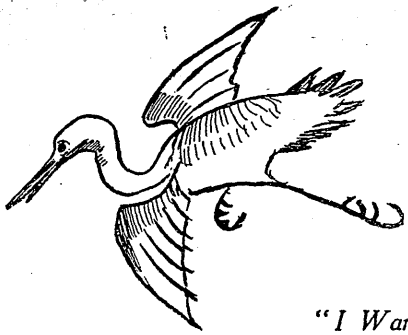
against thieves every night.

人善被人欺

The quiet man is taken advantage of,

馬善被人騎

and the quiet horse is ridden by every one.



VI.

"I Want to Witness"

DURING the daytime we used to have many heart to heart talks. So the hours, very painful hours to him and very anxious ones for me, wore gradually away. The fourth day out was the worst. He was so very ill that I despaired of his life. I felt his pulse ; it was a mere thread. I made sure that he would die that day. I became alarmed for myself, for I knew what I was risking. My own life might be forfeited if that man died and I was found with a dead Chinese on my boat. It was a serious business. There was no remedy for it but prayer, and I prayed often and heartily.

Finally I thought I had better tell him how matters stood. "Well, Cheng," I

said, "your pulse is very low. If the Lord calls you to-day, are you ready to go?"

"As the Lord wills," he said quietly.

"But look here," I said, "how do you feel about dying here away from home? Had you not better take a little opium to prolong your life till we get you to the hospital?"

"You know," he said, "what the former missionary told Koh, that it was better to die breaking off opium than live with the sin upon him; and that if he thus died God would be pleased with him,"—and he looked at me with his dim eyes. "Was that true?" he said.

The tears came to my eyes as I looked at him and listened to him. With suppressed emotion I replied, "Oh, Cheng, you know it is true."

"Koh died breaking off," he continued. "How much longer have I to live, anyway? If I die now breaking it off I will receive the pleasure of God. I prefer to be just this way. I am not afraid."

My heart was full. I said nothing. The old man knew his condition and he had made up his mind.

After sitting quietly for a time, wrapped in thought, he suddenly broke the silence by saying, "I want to live three years."

I almost laughed. I was afraid he would not live until night. I said, "I shall be surprised if you live three days ! Why do you want to live three years ?"

Then came words, uttered quietly and in a humble tone, that burned their way into my heart. The expression of faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman could not have delighted the Master more than those words delighted me. They were the real and intense utterance of a man who had but one desire in life. Simply he said, "I want to witness, I want to witness."

Tears rushed to my eyes. I was profoundly moved. I had never heard words like these. I was pastor and he was learner, but now he was teaching me as I had never been taught. He had caught the martyr spirit of Koh. I felt that a man with such a spirit, a man who would rather die than take opium to save himself, a man who was eager to live, yet only to witness for his Saviour, should not die. How could we afford to lose him ? China needed such as he,

oh, so greatly! If God would be pleased to bring him through and let him tell it all for Jesus' sake! In tears we laid it before Him. Surely He had been training this man to fulfil His own purposes.

How it was I know not, but he lived. We reached Chang-Teh on the fifth day, and calling a sedan chair, I had him conveyed to the hospital. Already the worst was over, so far as giving up opium was concerned. A little nook was appointed him and loving hands ministered to his needs.

The doctor kept him in hospital about a month.

"That is a good old fellow you sent to the hospital," he remarked to me. "He is a wonderful man to read his Testament; he pores over it with his half-blind eyes, and rubs his nose up and down the pages all day long."

At the end of the month he came to our compound. He was unspeakably glad and grateful that at last the opium habit was conquered. Thirty years before he had toyed with the drug as a careless young "sport," and for at least twenty years it had held him completely in its power.

Often he had cursed himself for his folly. Often he had cursed "the foreign English devils" who had forced the traffic upon his country. With an oath he would call it "the barbarian's muck."

Yet as every evening came on, if at all able to get out, he would take his lantern to light his way home again, and, with ever quickening step, hasten to the den and let his enemy beguile him once more—if only for the night. What if he would be miserable again to-morrow? What if he knew not where to-morrow's opium was to come from? There was at least present enjoyment. The pains and cough would leave him for the night. His mind was fresh and he could scheme how to get to-morrow's money.

Then a change had come. Through Koh he had received a higher impulse. He dared no longer sin against God as he had done. He had to cease to wring money from men by wrong means. Still this opium appetite held him by the throat, but now through God's grace he was free. At last, at long last, the battle had been fought, the victory won. The awful sin against himself no

longer enchained him, and an unutterable gladness filled his heart. "T'oh liao t'i, t'oh liao t'i !" he exclaimed joyfully, "the burden is dropped off, the burden is dropped off !"

Almost at once we began to speak about his baptism. Usually we kept the converts a year or more on probation before admitting them to baptism ; but in his case it seemed to me that probation had well been passed, and so we arranged that on a certain Sunday it should take place. The fact that that Sunday happened to be my own birthday added wonderfully to the old man's joy.

It was an occasion long to be remembered. The strange train of circumstances in the man's career ; his loss, his sorrow, his disease ; his forlorn and despairing condition for years ; the death of his friend Koh in his heroic struggle to give up opium ; his own victory and his partial recovery ; all combined to fill his own heart, and mine too, with thoughts too deep for speech.

The little Chang-Teh congregation was much impressed with his testimony. The triumph of grace was apparent to the most

unbelieving. I realized that the church was being enriched by the reception of such a one. How glad I was that I was privileged to administer the rite !

Cheng's own joy was unspeakable. He could scarcely believe it true. So long had he waited, so long had he been on the border of death, so long in despair ; and now the blessed gates were wide open in love to receive him. O rapturous moments ! Doubtless the angels rejoiced exceedingly, and the Father and Son bestowed their joint unction while trembling hands were laid upon his head. To Cheng his baptism was a time of rich spiritual enduement, and greatly he needed it, for fiery trials were not yet ended.

刻薄成家利無久長

Money made by hard dealing never lasts long.

藥不能醫假病

Medicine cannot cure imaginary disease.

酒不能解真愁

Wine cannot alleviate real sorrow.

良巫之子多死於鬼

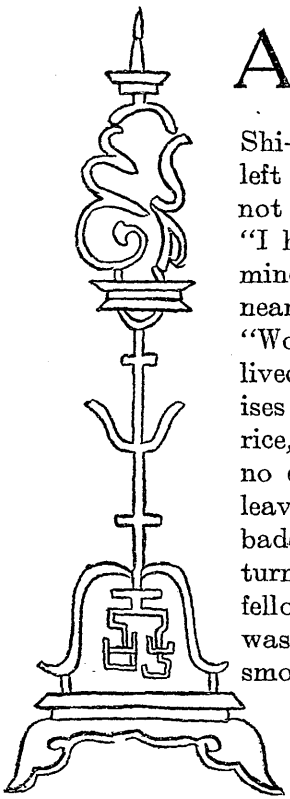
The son of the skilful sorcerer is generally killed by demons.

良醫之子多死於病

The son of the skilful doctor often dies of disease.

VII.

Cheng's First Sermon



A FEW days after his baptism Cheng went off to his home in Shi-Shou, but before he left he asked me if I would not grant him a privilege. "I have not a friend like-minded to converse with near my home," he said. "Would you mind if I lived on the church premises? I will find my own rice, of course, and be of no expense." I gave him leave willingly and he bade me farewell and returned to Shi-Shou. A fellow traveller thither was a confirmed opium smoker, constantly using the drug, but Cheng never wavered.

All winter long, however, he was extremely ill. His cough and blood spitting were fearful. The chapel keeper told me afterward that he did not know how the

poor fellow bore it, and why, knowing what relief opium would at once give him, he did not again yield to its seduction. But the winter passed somehow, and he got through the spring and summer. His testimony in these days, in spite of much weakness, was blessed to the people of Shi-Shou. He was being prepared for what was to follow.

Early in the autumn I saw him. He was then somewhat better, but still very weak.

"If I could only get strong," he would say to me, "if I could only get strong."

"Well, come along with me to Chang-Teh," I said. "Let the doctor see you again, perhaps he can help you."

He consented gladly, and I took him with me on my return. He lived at our compound, the doctor examined and prescribed for him, and he grew much stronger.

It was a time of revival with us. Never had our Chang-Teh church been so stirred. At the after meetings following our nightly services, amidst prayer, testimony and joyful singing, a number of persons were brought to God. Cheng received a new enduement of joy and became ecstatically happy. He would sit back in his chair and

with an actual whoop of delight exclaim, "Kw'ai hoh, kw'ai hoh ! O pi ni men tu kw'ai hoh sie !—Happy, happy ! I'm the happiest of all !"

The church was greatly stirred up by this revival, so much so that the members themselves eagerly said, "What can we do for our wives and families ? Cannot they share somehow in the blessing we have received ?" So I decided to hold special services for women. It was awkward, of course. Could we get the women to come ?

I knew well the Chinese prejudices. Hence I was careful in making preparations to avoid all occasions of offence. I sent to the residences of retired officials and gentry throughout the city my large Chinese visiting card with a special invitation. I also put up posters on the streets announcing the meetings, stating that husbands might escort their wives or sons their mothers to the services, also that I had arranged that the wife of one of the missionaries should be always present, to, as the Chinese say, "accompany" the preaching. The result was that the large chapel in which we held service was crowded with women. Many of

the titled ladies of the city attended ; and their husbands and sons, though not entering the chapel, stood at the doors eagerly watching and listening, while the street outside was crowded with sedan chairs and attendants.

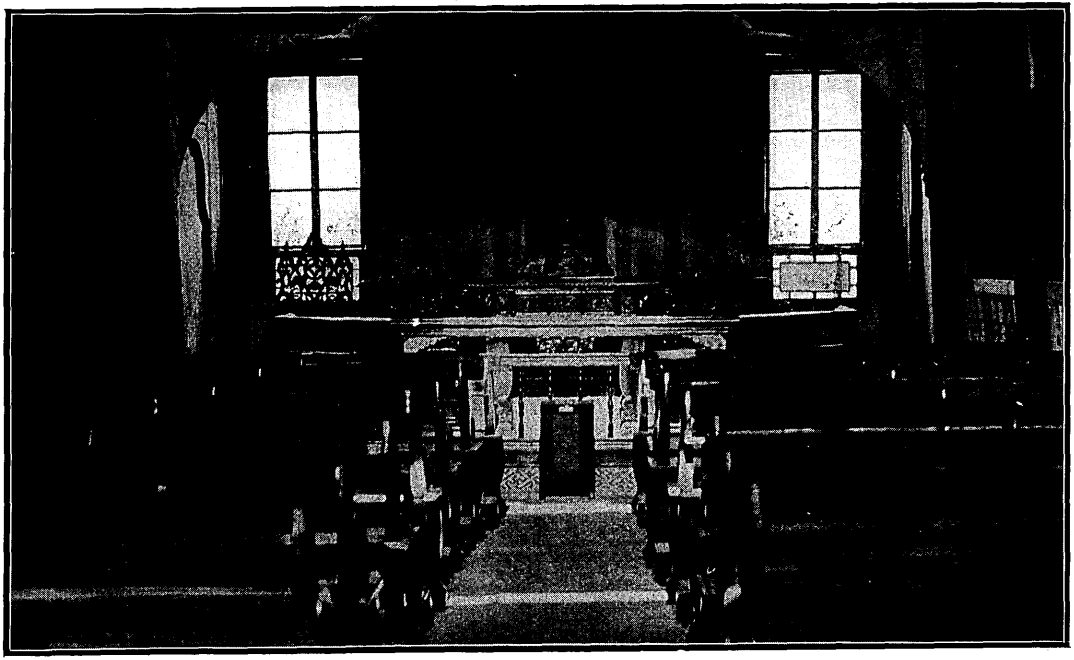
Realizing that the experience through which Cheng had come would be of interest and help to the women, many of whom were in the clutches of the opium habit, I said to him, "Cheng, I have a big meeting shortly. I want you to give your testimony."

"Can I do it ?" he said. "What shall I say ?"

"Tell them," I said, "how the Lord has saved you. I believe you have a message for them." I was convinced that God was going to use him, that he was really called to be a messenger of the Cross.

He now waited upon God to get the message direct from Him. His whole thought and prayer were concentrated upon this one thing — God must speak through him. I would say to him occasionally, "Have you got your message ?" and he would shake his head and reply, "Not yet."

One morning, however, he told me God



Where Cheng Preached his First Sermon

had given him something to say ; and, hesitatingly and modestly, how it had come to him. "Last night," he said, "as I lay awake, now thinking, now praying, about midnight I received four thoughts. I got up, lit my lamp and wrote them down." With what "large letters" he wrote, as at the mid-hour of night he had with dim eye and trembling hand recorded God's word to him, I saw next day. He proposed to speak of the Crucifixion under four aspects, the plan of his address showing the clear, logical style of the Chinese scholar.

He was surprised when he came into the church and saw the congregation. "Why, this suggests the mythical country of women !" he exclaimed.

One of the native evangelists made the first address. Then the time came for Cheng to speak. He had been praying so much and looking forward so eagerly to this meeting, and had caught so much of the glow of the revival, that his spirit was most intense.

He started off like a flame of fire. His voice was strong and high pitched, and he so tremendously in earnest that, as he went on, he became much excited and jumped up

and down, gesticulating wildly. There were a number of ladies of official rank present who had never had anyone address them in such a violent manner. Some misunderstood this vehemence, and the result was that twenty or thirty in the front seats got up and went out.

This worried me somewhat, and yet I concluded that, as it was the old man's first effort at preaching and he was so filled with the Spirit and so enthusiastic, I dared not interfere in any way, though I felt he was overdoing it in his excitement. I said to myself, This man has a message. He must deliver it, and I believe the blessing of God will be upon it. So I let him proceed.

On he went through one, two, three, four points, but at such a rate that his zeal carried him away and he swung off at a tangent. When these unprepared thoughts had been given, I saw he was trying to find his way to a logical conclusion, and to save him from embarrassment, helped him to close.

His address was a powerful one. His theme was God's love in Christ; to the world, and to him personally. Here he was inexpressibly tender, his whole soul on fire

with a love that would requite as much as in him lay, God's love to him. He branched off to strongly combat the worship of the Goddess of Mercy, whom the Chinese women revere as their ideal of tenderness and affection.

The Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin, or in full, Kuan Shi Yin (Intent upon the World's Cries) is a comparatively late invention of Buddhism which has succeeded in gaining a large place in the hearts of Chinese women. It was not thinkable that the male deities could enter into the sympathies, understand the needs and enjoy the confidence of the modest and reticent women of China. So Buddhism, with an eye to endowments in land and wealth, created this goddess, a model of virtue and benevolence. Her images frequently show her with a child or children in her arms. She is the Chinese Madonna.

"Who is this Goddess of Mercy?" said Cheng, to his audience of women. "She is represented as the third daughter of Miao Chuang Wang, and is called, as you know, the San Miao Chu. Now, what does Miao Chuang Wang mean? Is it not the miao of 'mysterious,' the chuang of 'place,' and the wang of 'king'? And what does San

Miao Chu mean ? San is 'third,' miao 'mysterious,' chu 'pearl.'

"The King of the Mysterious Place' is no other than Self. The 'mysterious place'is the heart. Self has four daughters residing in the heart—they are Wine, Lust, Wealth and Anger. Buddhism, thinking to gain the people's wealth, has laid hold on the third, the 'Third Mysterious Pearl,' wealth.

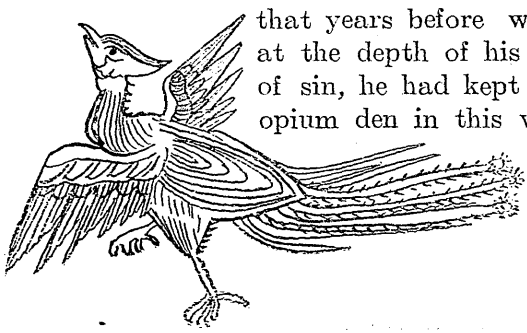
"They deceive you to get your gold. Our Jesus is not so. He not only loves you but he gave Himself for you. He suffered for you, and now only wants your hearts' love in return. He is the true Kuan Yin—His ear ever open to the cries of earth. He heard mine when I was in deepest distress, and I know He will hear yours."

I was strongly impressed, after he had given us his first sermon, that he was called to preach. He had the influence and prestige of a man of good birth and education, and although shattered in physique, the Spirit of God was so mighty in him that I felt we must give him a place as a leader in the church. He had said some time before, "I want to witness." The opportunity for his witnessing had come, and it was my duty to clear his way.

VIII.

A Minister and a Witness

CHENG continued so to improve in health and evinced such earnestness of spirit that he was a great help and inspiration to the church in Chang-Teh. Ere long his way opened to definite work for God. I sent him one hundred miles up the river to take an appointment temporarily at a place where there had been some trouble in the church necessitating the removal of the former evangelist. It made it hard for Cheng that years before when at the depth of his life of sin, he had kept an opium den in this very



place, and everybody knew him. Now they could not understand how such a man should so suddenly be preaching the gospel. At first there was a lack of appreciation. He felt it was a difficult position for him, but his resort was prayer.

He would get up on the rostrum and thunder away in the tremendous style he had so suddenly acquired, jumping, gesticulating, and shouting.

The people were amazed, even shocked. In fact one or two of the neighbors, who were not Christians but friendly and sympathetic, came to me and asked if I would not tell Cheng to improve his manners. They said, "To us it suggests the theatre."

I said : "But do you not think the man is genuine ? Does he not exhibit a change of life ?"

"Oh !" they replied, "he is earnest and sincere. We all believe that the man has experienced a thorough change of life, but the trouble is that he screams too loud."

It was, however, nothing but his intense zeal that stirred him to such manifestations.

In a short time, requiring a strong, steady man for the important work of open-

ing a new station, I took him to live with me in the city of Nan-Chou where we had just succeeded in renting premises. Nan-Chou had not had Christian work done in it before. It was altogether a new beginning, but, strange to say, when we got our church opened up it was immediately filled by a lot of roughs. This kept all self-respecting people from coming to hear us.

Gradually the situation dawned upon us, and Mr. Cheng and I felt that we must either change these men or drive them away. The situation must be either mended or ended, and yet we wished to save as many of them as we possibly could. We were convinced they were coming to us with a wrong motive, seeking connection with the foreigners to do evil with impunity.

They evidently imagined we were like the Roman Catholics, whose name in the city for that sort of thing was just as vile as it could be. Indeed we found that many of them had been driven out of the Roman Catholic communion, though more from jealousy and faction than for their personal wickedness. They expected to be able, under our protection, to get into all sorts of

trouble on the street, and yet be immune from prosecution.

Mr. Cheng and I felt the burden very much, though it nearly all devolved upon him because I was away from home so frequently. I had five or six out-stations which required considerable supervision, and was only in the city for a few days at a time. Thus the work was almost wholly Mr. Cheng's, and the dear old man was continually in prayer for his people.

He used to come to me with his troubles. He said finally, "These are a pack of rascals coming to us. We have to get out on the street and proclaim our message, or people will begin to think the Gospel Hall is made up of such as these."

So it was agreed that each Sabbath we would preach on the street. We arranged with one or other of the more respectable of our adherents to let us have a place at the front of his door, and this adherent would prepare a platform, made of doors laid on benches, with Chinese lanterns hung above it, and a small tea-table to serve as a pulpit. At night when the lanterns were lit, it presented quite a respectable appearance.

We were particular about this, for we wanted the street people to realize that it was an important message we had to give, and designed to have all our surroundings in keeping with the proprieties of the occasion.

After tea we would walk down the street. If it was dark I would have to lead Cheng, as his eyes were so bad that at night he could not see the uneven places. Chinese streets are never lit up. The only light is that which you carry in your hand.

Arrived at the place of preaching, we would find a large crowd already gathered. Sometimes the street would be closely packed. I have seen it literally solid with people as far as we could see. Then Mr. Cheng and I, with perhaps one or two helpers, would mount the platform, and he would address the audience.

The fact that he was familiar with every phase of Chinese life made his preaching intensely interesting to them. Being an official's son, he knew all phases of official life; as a student he could meet the needs of that important class in China; and having engaged in so many kinds of business, he could readily interest the business men. This

wide knowledge of life contributed largely to his success.

On such an occasion I have heard him tell, yet without seeming to tell it, that is, without personal allusions, the story of his own life, taking for his text, perhaps, the parable of the Prodigal Son. He had a really wonderful power in describing and applying all the parts of that story, because he had been through it all himself. When he described the affluent young man, headstrong and reckless, leaving his own home for the "far country" of sinful pleasure, he could picture it from his own experience; and when telling of the prodigal's waste of his substance, he knew that well, for he had gone through thousands and thousands of his own; while when he came to speak of the poor fellow's wretchedness, and of his living on the husks, he had himself known the bitterness of that for nearly twenty years. Then how tenderly he would bring in the loving-kindness of the father who welcomed the prodigal back!

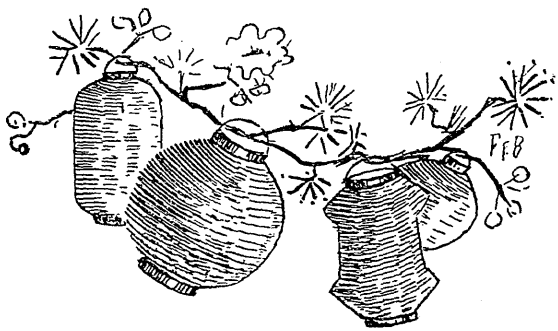
His story of the grace of God was always marvellously sweet because it had been so sweet to him. Although his patrimony

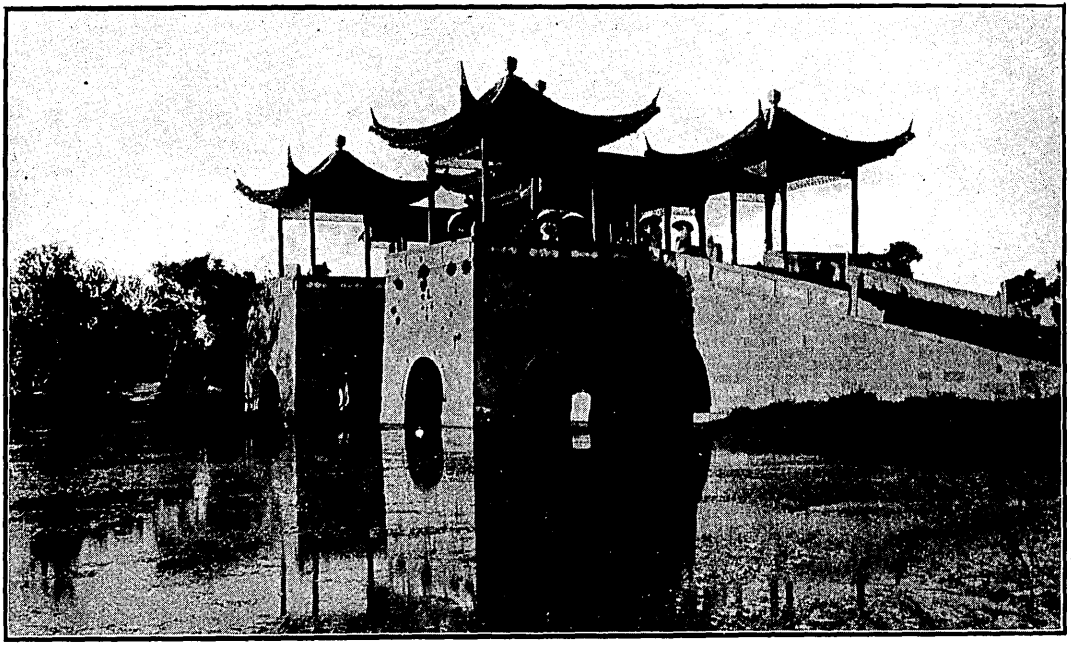
could never come back to him, and although his wife and family could never come back to him, yet a large measure of his health had been restored him. His skin had the appearance of that of a man who was renewing his youth. Even his eyes, under treatment, had improved in some measure, and his strength had so increased that while formerly it had been a tremendous effort to walk two or three miles to the church, now, through the grace of God, he could walk ten or fifteen miles a day.

To him the love of God was exceedingly precious, and he marvelled that He should so bless him after years and years of misery and disappointment, spent not only in deepest sorrow and loneliness, but in the deadly grip of opium. Now, comparatively strong in body, happy and hopeful in heart, freed from the opium at last and with an assured and joyous sense of sins forgiven, life had a meaning it had never possessed before.

It was a great source of delight to him to realize that he was no longer a misery to himself and others, but a real help, with the position of a leader and even permitted to preach the blessed gospel which had saved

him. This was the prodigal's return to him. Sometimes the pathos in his voice as he spoke of his former life, was most touching. How tenderly grateful he was toward God, and how affectionate toward me! To his "Grace—Lord" in heaven, and under Him, to me his "grace-man" he felt he owed everything.

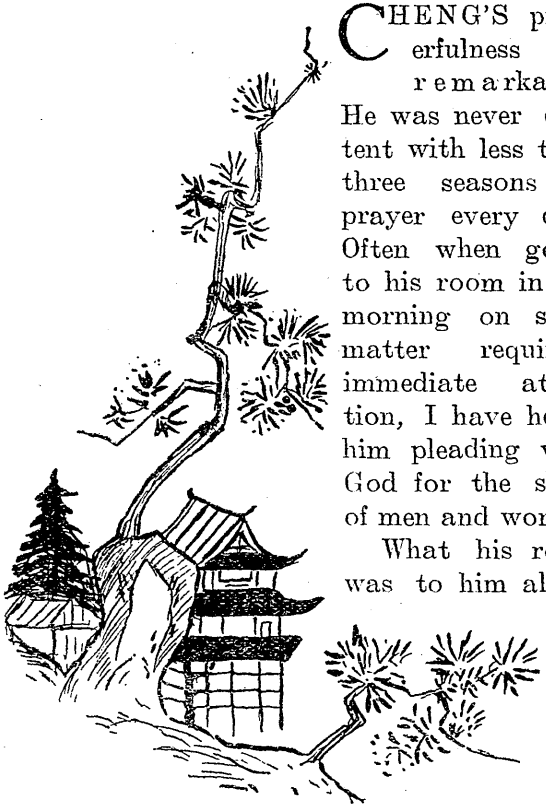




The Temple of the Five Bridges

IX.

"Full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom"



CHENG'S prayerfulness was remarkable. He was never content with less than three seasons of prayer every day. Often when going to his room in the morning on some matter requiring immediate attention, I have heard him pleading with God for the souls of men and women.

What his room was to him alone,

my own room was to the helpers as a whole. On the grey woollen mat in the centre of that room many a battle was won. To that place were led all manner of afflicted ones—the opium patients with their acute sufferings, the persecuted and the friendless, the weak and the erring. Cheng would lead them in, and together we would ask for them the help and healing sorely needed.

Five populous counties were included in our district (two other counties lay adjacent but we dared not attempt more), and for these counties we were much in prayer.

On one occasion we prayed specifically and importunately that we might have during the ensuing year two hundred homes clear from all idolatry and ancestral worship. Day after day for an hour we met and poured out our souls to the "Lord of all Grace." Cheng's heart's cry was that the people were as "mi-shih tih yang" (deluded, lost lambs). "Lord, Thou art the Good Shepherd, lead them back into Thy fold," he pleaded.

The prayer was answered. During that year over two hundred families purified

their homes from these symbols of the reign of darkness. No wonder that a recent report of the work of God in that district states : "Heathenism stands in awe at the movement."

On Sunday mornings, when the burden of a service was upon him, Cheng would steal away from his own room, where he might be interrupted by someone coming to call upon him, or by people coming early for the service, and find his way to the back of our premises, where in private he would walk up and down, praying and singing, in active soul-preparation.

I have seen him at such times with both hands stretched upwards as if he were literally drawing down the power from on high, and heard him cry out to God in song to the air of "Even me," some choruses we had rendered into Chinese :

"K'ai tao o, k'ai tao o,
Ch'i ch'iu Sheng Shen, K'ai tao o."
(Instruct me, instruct me,
Holy Spirit, instruct me,)

or—

"Ch'ong man o, ch'ong man o,
Ch'i ch'iu Sheng Shen, Ch'ong man o."
(Fill me full, fill me full,
Holy Spirit, fill me full).

Or he might be kneeling, with his heart full of blessing, and his gentle utterances more like the cooing of a dove than articulate prayer.

He lived in rapt communion with his Heavenly Father. I have seen him moving about his room drawing in his breath as though the very air were full of sweetness, and he were partaking of it as of honey from the comb.

From this refreshment he would go at the sound of the ringing of the bell, and take his place on the platform for preaching. Under such an inspiration his opening prayer was always a source of blessing. Then with what agility he would rise to his feet, (for a man who had been on the verge of the grave for so many years), open the Bible and announce his text with his face all aglow. That face, once so thin and wan, now shone with the light of God.

His power over his audience was very great. I have seen them in tears more than once, and this is saying a great deal for a phlegmatic Chinese audience. With a few quick touches of his quaint yet dignified style he laid bare his hearers' hearts. He

described their sin and need with keen insight, often reverting to his own experiences and telling how God had saved him. Had he not been the very chief of sinners, and had he not been lower than any of them?

"Ni men puh hsiao teh k'u, muh iu ch'ih ko kw'ei," he would say; "You don't know what bitterness is, you have never eaten loss. But my myriad forms of bitterness have been changed into myriad forms of grace. Then I suffered Satan's torment, now I joy in Jesus' love." With tears running down his face he would give glory to God for his physical recovery and spiritual enlightenment.

Not only upon his public audiences did he have such power, it extended to visitors who came to see him in the guest hall. Often I would find him at prayer with men who had never been to our place before, who knew nothing about prayer but what he had just told them. Having assured them of its efficacy, he had persuaded them to kneel with him, and there he would be teaching them their first lessons in the art of true prayer. This showed much persuasive power for many would naturally be unwilling to

kneel, their superstition causing them to be afraid to do so, or their unbelief and pride such that it would be repugnant to them.

Occasionally a visitor would come to him with some ulterior motive. He might be a litigant, having a case at law pending in the magistrate's yamen, whose heart was full of bitterness against his opponent. The case perhaps was going against him, since his foe had more funds at his disposal, or the assistance of some of the gentry.

To counterbalance this, he had come to the Gospel Hall to get help from the foreigner, for that obtained he would feel sure of success. If the foreigner proved obdurate, help from the native evangelist would be valuable if he could get it—for unauthorized use of a missionary's card and influence had worked wonders more than once in the wretchedly unjust courts of China. If simple persuasion were not sufficient he would try to bribe the evangelist. Often has Mr. Cheng come to me, telling how he had just been approached by a man who had offered him a couple of hundred dollars, or several hundred acres of land, or made him some other such offer for his help.

He had marvellous skill with people of this kind. I have heard him go into the very heart of the case with his visitor, who supposing him to be intensely interested and possibly ready to help, would tell him all. When Cheng had heard the entire story, how he would lay bare the folly of the proceeding ! How he would show the man the sin of cherishing enmity, and the utter foolishness of going on with the case ! He would say, "Is not winning, losing ? Do you not lose more in the long run ? For through not losing your case, you lose your friend !"

In such conversations his language was always rich with Chinese proverbs, most applicable to the case in hand. "Yao teh ren fuh o, ch'u pih o fuh ren," he would quote ; "To get a man to yield to me, I must first yield to the man." Such a proverb would come with great weight to his visitor, because of the source from which it was quoted, though no doubt very much increased in effect by the spirit in which the quotation was made. Then he would reason of right and wrong, of God and salvation, and put the gospel in such an enticing way as to make men feel they would be tre-

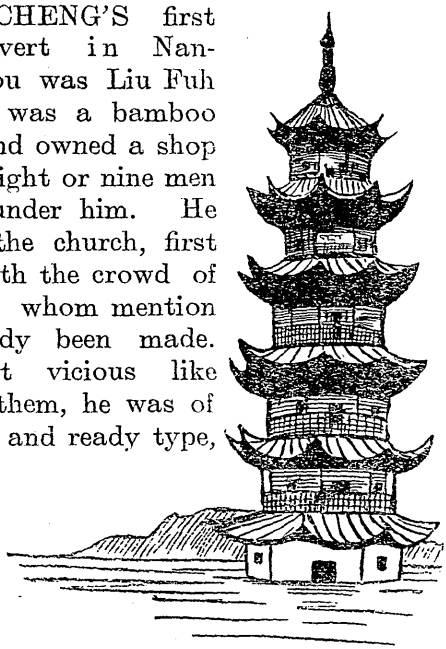
mendous losers if they did not throw aside not only the particular enmity they were indulging, but everything in the world that would keep them from obtaining so glorious a possession as Christ's salvation.

I have known men to come to the church with a bribe in their hands and revenge in their hearts, and to leave it ready to make peace with their enemies, even at a loss. And when peace had been made they would find their way back again to the church to hear more from this wise old man.

Many preachers have the ability to withstand litigants like these when they come to seek the aid of the church, but have not the faculty of imparting to them any positive blessing, much less of winning them over to the gospel. Some indeed are taken in by their wiles. Few there are who evince the remarkable power Mr. Cheng possessed. Perhaps it was the result of his own experience during long years of litigation, when recognized as the strongest man in his district to whom appeal could be made for such help. He well knew all the ins and outs of Chinese law courts, and how often the blow intended for his enemy descended on the litigant's own head.

X.

Mr. Cheng's First Spiritual Son and Grandson in Nan-Chou



MR. CHENG'S first convert in Nan-Chou was Liu Fuh Tai. He was a bamboo worker, and owned a shop and had eight or nine men working under him. He came to the church, first of all, with the crowd of roughs, of whom mention has already been made. While not vicious like many of them, he was of the rough and ready type, and very much inclined to resent any aggression with blows. Unable to bear the heat of the summer in his little shop, he had been accustomed to make

yearly pilgrimages to the famous holy mountain of Hunan, and there pray to the idols for a renewal of health. In his shop he had no less than nine idols, which he worshipped most assiduously. He was in fact a perfect slave to idol worship. He came, too, from a part of Hunan where it has a more thorough hold on the people than perhaps anywhere else.

Shortly after we opened up work in Nan Chou he came to us. The old year was drawing to its close and Mr. Cheng strongly urged those who came to worship to begin the New Year with God, and put away all the foolish practices of heathenism.

Liu was deeply impressed with the strong personality of the preacher ; and, on the fifteenth day of the first moon of the New Year, instead of entering upon it by participating in idol processions and renewing the worship in his own shop, he decided to follow the "Jesus doctrine." He let it be known that he intended to put away his idols, and his friends hastily came and took them away for fear he might destroy them.

To one who had held to idolatry so long and so earnestly this was a tremendous

step to take ; and strange to say, that very evening he became ill, and muttered through the night in an attack of delirium. The next day, though still weak and ill, he made his way to the chapel, where Mr. Cheng and I prayed with him, gave him medicine, and sent him home more determined than ever to follow God, regardless of any harm Satan might do him.

From this time his growth in grace was steady. We soon heard that he was having daily worship in his shop with his workmen. He was gaining considerable power in prayer too. So earnest a life could not but bring on persecution, for he would not enter into heathen ceremonies, or contribute to the subscriptions constantly being taken up in China for all sorts of idolatrous purposes. The business men near his shop told him they would no longer allow him to do business there since he refused to bear his share of the expense of the spiritual welfare of the community.

One day a blacksmith who had a shop next door, careless of the sparks that flew from his anvil, set fire to the matting of

Liu's wall. It had barely caught fire when it was extinguished, but his neighbors seized the opportunity to declare that the God of Fire was evidently displeased with him, and that he must head with a goodly sum a subscription list which would be passed round, and thus aid in paying priests to appease the offended deity. He came to interview Mr. Cheng in regard to this matter and told him that the neighbors were all against him, and would not allow him to do business at his old stand ; declaring that if the God of Fire were not appeased, wrath would descend upon the community. "What shall I do ?" he asked, in great perplexity.

Thrown upon his own resources, Mr. Cheng sought light in prayer. Like a flash a bold plan came to him which he broached to Liu.

"Mr. Liu," he said, "to-morrow is Sunday, and in accordance with our custom of preaching on the street on Sabbath evenings, let us to-morrow preach in front of your shop, that we may reach your neighborhood directly. For," he continued, "we have several things to accomplish. We must

let your neighbors know who is the real God of Providence, and the folly of appealing to this God of Fire. Besides, we want to let the people of that entire neighborhood know that you are one of us, and that our teaching is all of a high moral character. In fact, we want to unfold the whole blessed plan of salvation to them." Liu consented and so the matter was arranged.

At this time Liu was expecting a visit from his elder brother, who was to arrive in a day or two.

On Sunday evening, Mr. Cheng and a number of adherents made their way to Liu's shop, in front of which had been erected a platform with a profusion of Chinese lanterns.

The street was crowded. The people evidently wanted to hear what attitude the Gospel Hall would take in this matter agitating the minds of all. There was keen interest and no little excitement, and I do not doubt that if Mr. Cheng had been unwise in his attitude, or had been harshly aggressive instead of having his message saturated with love, Liu and he might have been

rioted that very evening, such was the intense feeling.

But he had been waiting much before the Throne that day. "You must, you must help your slave," he had cried to God. "Give me the victory, and let the people see the light."

The story was told me when I returned. For an hour and a half he held forth, sweeping everything before him. There was no weak moment, no weak point which the keen crowd might take advantage of to jeer him. The power of God resting upon such audiences had saved him from violence before, and so it was now. A foreign friend present told me he had never seen Cheng so wrought up, consumed, aflame, now speaking in piercing tones of bitter sarcasm, again in tenderest tones of pleading love. For several days after he was unable to do anything, being both hoarse and weak. But even in his weakness, a faint smile played over his face, the triumphant smile of a man conscious the Spirit had had His way and swept through him in pentecostal power.

He strongly impressed upon his audience that whatever Mr. Liu had been in the past,

A Travelling Chair

A Wedding Chair

his life now would be so guided by lofty principles that he would make the most peaceable of citizens and the best of neighbors. Before concluding, he further disarmed prejudice by giving the whole neighborhood a hearty invitation to come to the church to hear more of Jesus and His salvation.

Just as he had finished there was a movement on the outside of the crowd, and a number of men carrying a stretcher were seen forcing their way to the platform. Upon it lay a man apparently in the throes of death. When Liu looked at him he suddenly exclaimed, "Why, it is my brother whom I was expecting !" Upon inquiry, for his brother was too weak to speak, the bearers told him that he had become very ill two or three miles from the city, and unable to proceed farther, had persuaded them to carry him to his brother's.

At this strange interruption, many were the head-shakings and mutterings among the crowd. "The spirits after all are displeased with Liu," said some, "and though the God of Fire did not punish him, yet see his brother at the borders of death ! Sure-

ly the spirits are angry with Liu for taking up with this foreign religion." But they dispersed quietly, and the sick man was brought indoors.

This was a new burden for Mr. Cheng and Liu; for the one as the representative of the gospel in that district, and for the other as a believer of the gospel.

Liu's elder brother was apparently going to die on his hands. What was to be done? Prayer was the one resort, so that evening much prayer was made for the sick man. Next morning he was considerably better. Once more Liu was able to hold his head high among his neighbors. Though his brother had come to him so ill, his God was able for any occasion.

But this elder brother was a peculiar individual. In two or three days, when just able to be up, instead of thanking God, he went to the temple and sacrificed to the idols there, whom he thanked for his recovery. Next day he was again ill, and again Mr. Cheng was called in. By the use of such medicine as they knew of, and the more powerful aid of fervent prayer, the man was again restored.

Again he repaired to the temple to thank the idols, and again he became ill. This time his recovery was much more slow. Although we all endeavored to help him spiritually, his evil purposes evidently dominated him, and the gospel took no root.

After several weeks he became well, and then told his brother why he had come. He needed several hundred dollars to pay a debt incurred in a lawsuit which had gone against him. His brother not having the money at hand, or even half the amount, could not but refuse him. The other grew angry, precipitated a quarrel, seized the shop and goods, declared he would run the business, and drove his younger brother out.

In great distress Liu came to the chapel and interviewed Mr. Cheng. What was to be done with this brother, who after receiving so much kindness during his illness, could act in this unreasonable manner ? Mr. Cheng listened with sympathetic and yet troubled heart. What could be done ? It certainly was a difficult case.

There was no intention to go to law. On the contrary Liu had prayed most earnestly that his brother might be saved ; and

he desired to be truly Christian in his treatment of him, if by any means he might win him.

As usual when in trouble they went to their knees, but Mr. Cheng could get no light. When, after a little, they arose, imagine his surprise at Liu's saying to him in a quiet tone, "How would it be if I just let my elder brother have it all ?"

"Well," said Mr. Cheng, "if you are able to do that, then there is no problem at all. Then it is easy enough." Thus, accordingly, the matter was decided. Liu came to live for a few days at the chapel, for he was actually driven out, and wishing to gain his brother, let him have his way.

In the city was an official relative of Liu's to whom he could easily have appealed for help, but on his own initiative and entirely for the love of Christ, he refused to do so. So in the course of a few weeks the goods in the shop were all sold out. Not satisfied with this the elder brother tore down the house and sold it bit by bit.

At this time he was visited by Liu, who pointing to some things not yet disposed of, said, "Elder brother, you may have these

too." This depth of love and self-sacrifice was too much for the other, who burst into a flood of tears, and promised restitution. By the next day, however, his heart had again become hardened, and he took his departure from the city.

This story would not be complete without mentioning one thing more. A month or so after, Liu, now without means of livelihood, took some gospel portions with him and visited a city about twenty miles down the river, where he intended to sell them. At this place there happened to reside a member of his clan, a minor military official.

Of course Liu went to see him — and whom should he find there but his elder brother! The latter was staying with this relative, afraid and ashamed to go home, lest tidings of his disgraceful conduct might, in some way, have reached there. Imagine his surprise and uneasiness at seeing Liu, and his fear that his brother would tell this official relative of his shameful actions. But it was simply in line with Liu's former action and the lofty Christian principles he had shown throughout, that though he re-

mained several days, he never mentioned the matter at all.

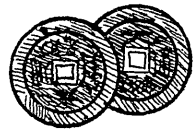
Mr. Cheng often spoke with delight of the power of Christ in this his first convert, and I would say to him, "Although during your first six months in Nan Chou there are not many converts to whom we can point, one like Liu is worth a hundred."

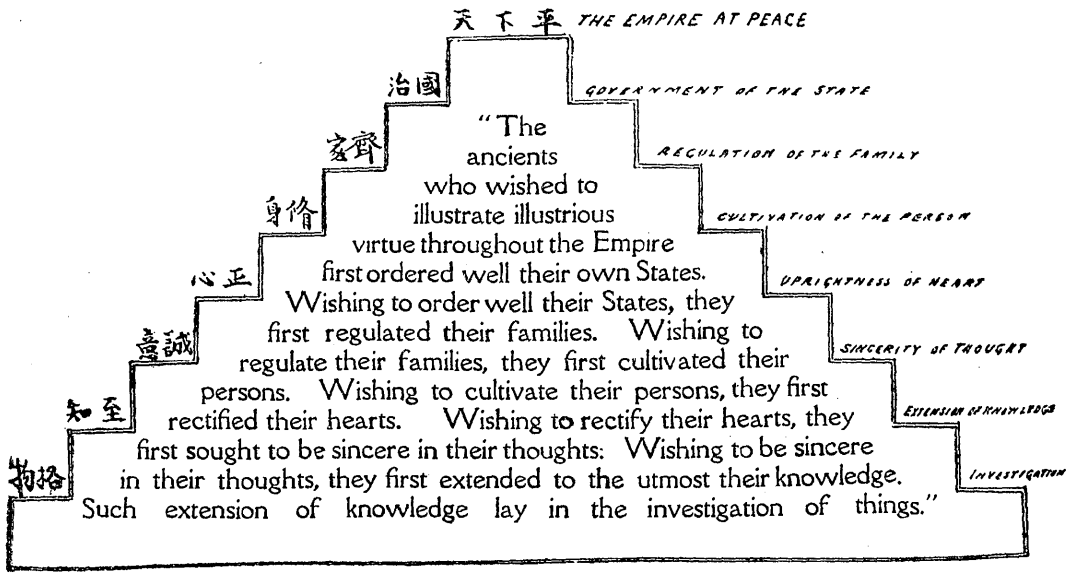
During his years of misfortune he had lost, as we have seen, all his children ; and he rejoiced that in this period of renewal of his life and activities there were given him children in the gospel. Liu, his first-born in the Spirit at Nan-Chou, quickly became an earnest soul-winner himself.

One day there came to us a young fish dealer complaining of agonizing pain in the head. The man's eyes were blood-shot and he was suffering intensely. Liu brought him to me, and I gave him something which if it did not cure, would at least not injure him. Too busy myself to spend more time with him at the moment, I asked Liu to take him to his room for instruction and prayer. He came again and again, his health improving steadily and Liu continuing to deal with him earnestly and successfully.

One day he invited his favorite teacher to accompany him home. His wife, grateful for her husband's recovery, received instruction readily. The symbols of idolatrous worship were taken down and family prayer established. Soon husband and wife were united in the faith.

I shall not readily forget Cheng's ejaculations of delight the first time this spiritual grandson of his publicly engaged in prayer in one of our social meetings. Strongly emotional as he was, the young man had a peculiarity of utterance in prayer which I find it impossible to describe. His deep sense of unworthiness and gratitude seemed to overwhelm him, and found expression in tones in which weeping and rejoicing were strangely and yet touchingly mingled.



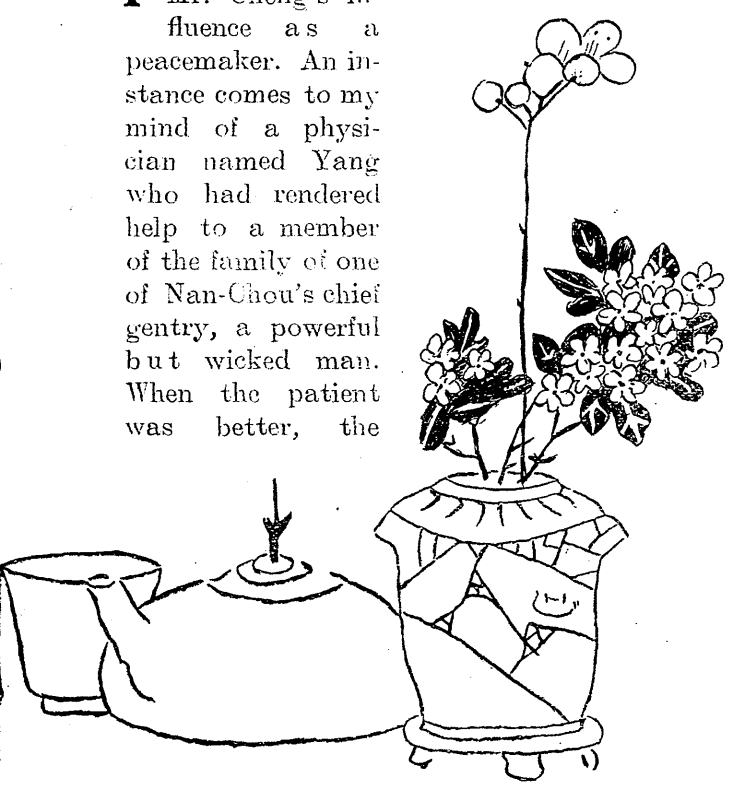


THE "EIGHT STEPS" OF "THE GREAT LEARNING" OF CONFUCIUS

XI.

How Yang and Hsie Forgave their Enemies

I HAVE spoken of Mr. Cheng's influence as a peacemaker. An instance comes to my mind of a physician named Yang who had rendered help to a member of the family of one of Nan-Chou's chief gentry, a powerful but wicked man. When the patient was better, the



physician was left to whistle for his money. Yang, bitter at heart, sought the help of others of the gentry to get his dues. Still further to strengthen his position, he proposed to connect himself with the foreign religion, and began to attend the Gospel Hall. Despite his ulterior motive, of which of course we were entirely ignorant, Cheng's strong personality began to grip him. One day a messenger brought news that Yang was using his connection with us to further his case with the gentry. I consequently felt it necessary to adopt severe measures, and promptly turned him out.

But to Cheng he seemed as a sheep likely to be lost. Next day my dear old evangelist went to his home. Shrewdly he excused my harsh treatment, by explaining that at times a stern executive was necessary to keep the church pure, that Christ's temple become not a den of thieves.

Then he showed Yang the privilege of yielding up this claim of his altogether, for the gospel's sake. Would not the gentry and the entire city hear of it? It would help our good name; and how it would shame the Catholics! Best of all, God

would bless him and make it up to him many fold.

"Come back again, Yang," he said. "Bring your wife, break off opium and be a happy man."

Yang was touched, and yielded every point. "But go and see if the pastor will receive me back."

"No fear of that—he'll be delighted to have you, now," said Cheng.

And Yang came. Ere long, not only he but his wife, son, and daughter-in-law had been baptized. The opium gone and his heart at rest, he soon became fat and rosy.

"Pastor !" he exclaimed, "what sweetness came into my heart when, for Jesus' sake, I yielded up my just claim !" Cheng remarked gaily, "You would never have come to it if the pastor had not put you out !"

The story of Yang suggests another no less interesting. Yang had a friend named Hsie, a schoolmaster, to whom he confided the joy of his new-found treasure.

With purer motives than his friend had first shown, Hsie came to us. His was not a bright or happy disposition. He had bad

eyes, was poor, and had no joy in life. He had hoped to get a position as teacher in the city, but his patron, who lived in the country, would not hear of Hsie's leaving, and eventually persuaded him to continue the school in his house for the next year. Hsie came regularly to service, it being holiday time. He was getting medicine for his eyes, and, through Cheng, a more blessed medicine for his soul.

All went well until the fifteenth day of the New Year. In a short time he expected to return to his country school. On this day, however, a coolie came to his house with a lot of luggage, threw it down at the outer door and went off without a word of explanation. Hsie at once knew what was wrong. The luggage was his own and had been left at his patron's. His patron had heard of his connection with the Gospel Hall, and had decided to cast him off. But it was too late now to secure another school. What would he and his family do for a livelihood ?

Full of wrath, he sought Cheng's advice as to prosecuting his former patron. Cheng listened with a heavy heart. How often

Satan had prepared just such pitfalls for the lambs about to be brought into the fold! "Hsie," he sympathetically said, "you have the right on your side. According to custom you can compel remuneration. It was despicably mean to return your luggage in that rude way, and dismiss you without a word."

Hsie, yet a child in the spiritual life, requested Cheng to champion his interests.

"You do not understand our position in these things very well, Hsie," answered Cheng. "Let us have a word of prayer, asking God to open up a way, and then go home, and we'll think it over. Come again to-morrow."

By the next day I had arrived home from visiting the out-stations, and Cheng sadly told me of Hsie's difficulty. "He is unfitted to do anything else, and how is he to live this year?" he said.

It did not take us long to decide that as a church we could not champion his interests in any way. It was not hard, either, to convince Hsie of the wisdom of such a decision. But what was Hsie himself to do?

At Cheng's suggestion, a half dozen of

us held a special prayer meeting in our guest-hall. Cheng's burden was, that Hsie might get a rich blessing out of this dire difficulty, that the church might be honored, and God glorified. He was sure then that all other things would be "added." Hsie was for petitioning the mandarin over literary affairs, and thus going to law. We all admitted that he had the right, and this might be done. But Cheng's knowledge of the courts led him to caution Hsie.

"You know it costs money to go to law in our Middle Kingdom," he said. "Your patron, too, is a man of influence and means ; are you sure you could win ? For might is right with us here, every day."

But Hsie was determined to have his rights at any cost. His blood was up, and he must "save his face." The sting of his patron's treatment had gone deep.

Suddenly Cheng went on another tack. "Hsie," said he, in measured tones, "you will not only lose in money, I fear you will lose in soul. You are just beginning the Christian way and Satan is casting about to destroy you. Let me advise you to turn his weapon against himself. By so doing

you will gain a complete victory, which would greatly help you now, and color your whole Christian life. Yield now to your adversary, and the full blessing Jesus will give you will recompense you. We will trust God for your livelihood for this year. Come and let the church have this added testimony. Remember your friend Yang and his joy in yielding."

There was much power in prayer — and some tears — and Hsie, as yet undecided, went home to think it over. He spent the night in deep thought. As the watches passed his feelings changed, and he said to himself, "Shall I yield, shall I? Yes, I'll yield! I'll take old Mr. Cheng's advice," and he fell asleep.

Several days later he told me, "When I arose in the morning, I had a new feeling in my heart. The old unhappy, restless, peevish feeling of many years was gone, and I could scarcely understand the quiet peace and joy that stirred within me." Cheng was overjoyed that Satan's wiles had been defeated, and Hsie became overjoyed too.

The patron, meanwhile, grew uneasy. What did this silence on Hsie's part mean?

He sent men to inquire, and Hsie told them to tell him that it was the glory of the Gospel Hall to freely forgive their enemies. Several days later he sent an apology, in the shape of a feast, to Hsie's house. Hsie hurried over to Cheng to ask him for advice. The venerable teacher had ever given him such excellent counsel, he would ask it again.

Cheng listened to his tale with much interest. "Do you want the feast, seeing that now your 'face' is restored you?" said he. Hsie's heart leaped at the new opportunity thus hinted at. "When I have forgiven I have forgiven. Why then the feast? I shall send the bearers back with it, saying, 'I have the joy of freely forgiving, is that not sufficient for me?'"

The church rallied round Hsie and helped him over the crisis, and I sent him to the hospital, where his eyesight was, to use his own expression, "three-tenths improved," and he was sure God had done wonderful things for him, whereof he was glad.

A Mandarin and family

Vice-Regal Examination Halls

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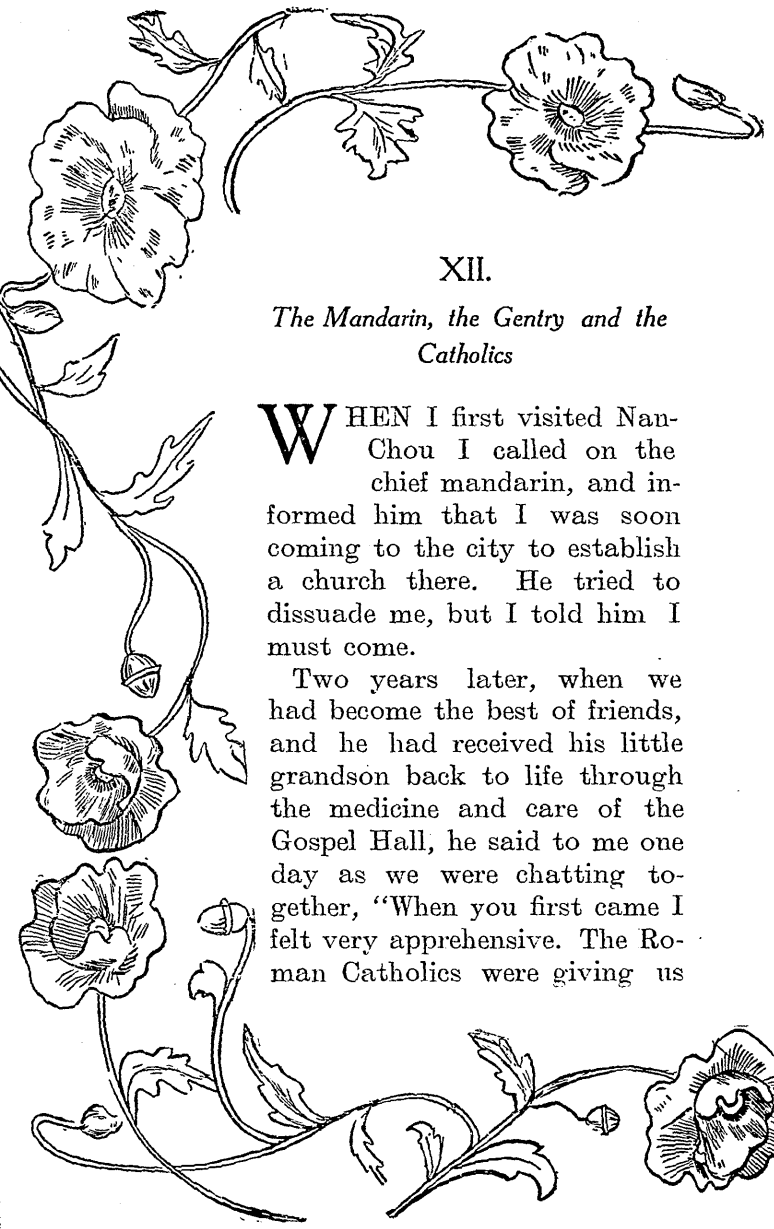


XII.

The Mandarin, the Gentry and the Catholics

WHEN I first visited Nan-Chou I called on the chief mandarin, and informed him that I was soon coming to the city to establish a church there. He tried to dissuade me, but I told him I must come.

Two years later, when we had become the best of friends, and he had received his little grandson back to life through the medicine and care of the Gospel Hall, he said to me one day as we were chatting together, "When you first came I felt very apprehensive. The Roman Catholics were giving us

no end of trouble; how did I know but the Gospel Hall would be just like them?

"I thought, too, if these rival churches begin quarrelling with each other, who knows whereunto it may lead? Hence I was very anxious, but now," here he pressed my hand warmly, "I cannot be grateful enough for your coming. My little grandson, had we not given him up? Others of my family, too, have been cured by your skill.

"The Gospel Hall has not only not given us any trouble, it seems to have had a distinct power for good in the community. The gentry praise you. The people have no complaints.

"I know personally of some connected with you who might have come before me with perfectly just grievances, who preferred to suffer wrong rather than have it known that a member of the Gospel Hall had a case in the courts. More than this; the Catholics gave us less trouble during the past year. The gentry say it is the power of the example of the Gospel Hall."

At the outset of our work in Nan-Chou, Mr. Cheng and I were careful to invite the gentry to our church to discuss with them

matters in which they and our church members might be concerned. While we asked that justice should be done our people, we wished it clearly understood that on no account would we interfere with their decisions. In all matters, except idolatrous worship, our members would be as subject to them as ever.

As a consequence the gentry were delighted, especially with our frank straightforwardness, and our recognition of their position and authority. They had suffered many indignities at the hands of the Roman Catholics who recognized only the authority of their priest. Many times had they had to send apologies to him for supposed wrongs done members of that fear-inspiring communion. So they would speak of us as cheng, i.e., upright or just. Thus our good name went forth.

The Tien Chu Chiao (Heavenly Lord Religion), as the Roman Catholics designate their church, bore in Nan-Chou, as elsewhere in China, a bad reputation.

It was a rough place, and the roughest found protection under the aegis of the church. They quickly learnt that a new

power had come into their midst, the power of "Great France," and connecting themselves with it were able now to terrorize the poor and merchant classes, and to defy the laws, the gentry, and the officials.

The Catholics had long boasted that the Gospel Hall dared not come to Nan-Chou. When we came they were proportionately angry. On one occasion they seized one of my colporteurs, who was selling books on the street. But for my near presence and that of several soldiers, there would have been a row, and as it was, they marched one of the soldiers off to their Hall ! One never knew what a day might bring forth.

But Mr. Cheng was wise, patient and strong. He would say, "This helps rather than hinders; the worse they are, the better we are by contrast. The people praise us for the evil we do not do, even when they refuse to see any positive good in us. The Catholics make our business livelier. Besides, now that other forms of persecution are diminishing through official protection, if it were not for Catholic opposition, we would be so peaceful as to lapse into sleep, inertia, and spiritual death. God is using

them to keep us wakeful and prayerful."

As we grew familiar with our audiences, we found that a small percentage was composed of Roman Catholics, who came frequently. We encouraged them to come, and after a time heard from them such remarks as this : "We haven't the New Testament at our Hall, only prayers and catechism. We enjoy the preaching and we want to learn."

Gradually we eliminated the unrepentant element among us, and the members of our community rapidly acquired a name for righteousness of life. This also helped to shame the Roman Catholics, so that some of them admitted to us, " Before we did not know what the gospel was like ; but Mr. Cheng not only preaches well—he lives it, too, and so do his followers."

人心如鐵

Though man's heart is iron,

官法如爐

the law is a furnace.

官清司吏瘦

If the official is honorable, his clerks grow lean;

神靈廟主肥

if the idol is efficacious, the temple-keeper grows fat.

錢落差手

Money dropped into a yamen-runner's hands

羊落虎口

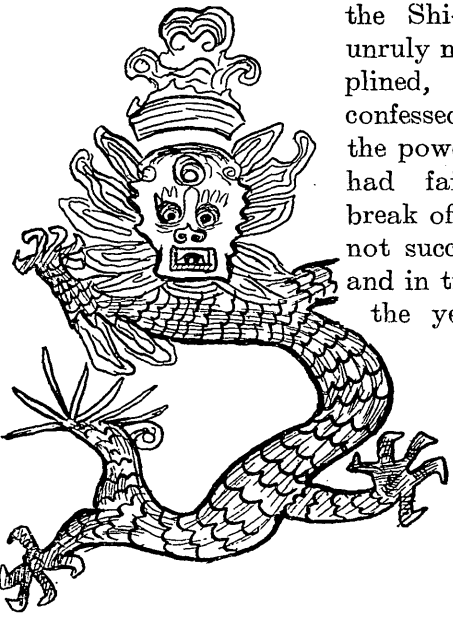
is like a sheep dropped into the mouth of a tiger.

XIII.

We Start an Opium Refuge

CHENG'S was the first case of cure of the opium habit that came under my close observation. It taught me that a most difficult case could be undertaken if there were faith in God.

When closer supervision could be given the Shi-Shou church, the unruly members were disciplined, and about twelve confessed to being under the power of opium. They had faithfully tried to break off from it but could not succeed of themselves, and in troublous times like the year of the Boxer riots when supervision was impossible, illness had come to some, hope had fled from others, and they had gradually yielded to the



full appetite once more. They gladly consented to bring bedding and baggage to the church, and money to pay for their keep for one month. I was to come and Cheng—we would take charge of them and lock the doors, and they would, at any cost, get rid of the drug.

Thus our opium refuge work was forced upon us. Of the first number who came, some suffered intensely, but all went home rejoicing and free. A certain tea-shop spread a story that one of the patients had died; so when all were well enough, we went in a body, single file, to that tea-shop, ordered tea, and then and there rendered public testimony that the rumor was false, and that God had kept every one. Of course, the news spread far and wide.

From that time we were besieged with requests to take other opium victims for cure. Our reply was that we would receive inquirers only. We made a rule that the opium users must, previous to entering our refuge, attend divine service for at least three months to learn the gospel and the rudiments of prayer; idolatry, too, must be put away. As Mr. Cheng said, "If you are

going to belong to God you must not hang out the devil's sign." So the work began.

By this time Nan-Chou had become the central station of the district. The first to come were men who had known the gospel for some time, but had been hindered because of opium from making progress and being baptized.

The good doctor at Chang-Teh fitted me out with necessary medicines and instructions. We had a number of extra beds made and brought straw to spread on the floor in case the beds were insufficient.

Our property at Nan-Chou consisted of two one-storey dwellings, one in front of the other. The rear building was the residence of the missionary. The front dwelling consisted of seven rooms, three on each side, the large central room being used as a chapel. One room had to be given up for kitchen purposes, and another for use as a guest hall, leaving but four rooms. In these the opium patients slept—four, five, and six in a room, on beds or on the floor.

On the day appointed they would come in ones and twos, with a coolie carrying the

luggage. Heartiest greetings awaited them, for smiles and sunshine were the practice of our household. With merry laughter, as if it were a bit of fun, we would search clothing, bedding, and box for opium or morphia pellets. It was custom, this searching—and who does not yield to established custom ?

Then, if the registration fee of one dollar for rice and medicine were ready, with some ceremony Mr. Cheng would lead them to the building in which the missionary lived. Here their names, ages, and places of residence were written down, and also their answers to questions as to how long they had used the drug, how much, and how often they had smoked per day, why they had begun to use it—from disease or otherwise, whether they had any disease at present, etc. The money was paid over and a number given the patient ; the ceremonial cup of tea and a quiet little talk about the necessity for trust and endurance ending the interview.

During such times, many were our discomforts. There might be three or four sleeping in Mr. Cheng's own room. We purposely distributed the patients among the apartments of our helpers so that we could

have better inspection over them at all times night and day. The kitchen was running at full blast, for there were, helpers and all, from twenty to twenty-five at table.

It afforded a splendid chance for soul-winning effort. Our helpers were carefully instructed to make the utmost of the opportunity, and we were all much in prayer beforehand. Our two religious services each day were bright with joyful singing and earnest preaching. Cheng's ringing messages were full of convincing power.

As the days passed, the patients grew weaker—some despondent, some really ill, with vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, pains everywhere, and what was a sore trial, sleeplessness. Sometimes their agony was such that they cried out, rolled to and fro on their beds, or paced the floor in distress that often amounted to desperation. I have seen some in delirium, climbing up the wall fighting an imaginary demon. From the fifth to the eighth day, few of us slept at all. Such groaning and loud yawning, such knocking of their arms or legs against the walls or upon the beds to shake off the persistent "sour pain" in the bones! No

wonder my courage failed me with every new lot of patients, and I used to ask myself, with a sinking heart, why I was foolish enough to try it again.

Then it was that Cheng was of greatest help. "Medicine?" he would say. "Yes, I'd take you in to the teacher for medicine, but that only helps the body—your trouble is at the heart. There are two appetites — the bodily craving, and the craving of the heart. How many of us left opium for weeks in the old days, only to finally succumb because our hearts still longed for it. Physical medicine may help the body but prayer medicine is what you need for the root of your trouble. If opium is not a demon it is very like one, and Jesus has his old-time power. He can help you."

All through the night he would be comforting this one, or praying with that one. "I know you are having a bad time," he would say, "but it is not half as bad as I had. You have a strong body, while mine had a hundred diseases. You are much younger than I was ; you have not smoked nearly so long, nor have you so large an appetite as I had. Why, it used to take until daylight to satisfy me !"

With a laugh, he would tell how he had turned night into day in the old times. "We needed no night watchman at our house," he would say, "for I kept the watches through, on the opium couch; and the thief seeing my little opium light dared not enter. You see opium is of some use, after all. Ha! ha!"

In spite of themselves they would all laugh, when he would add, "No wonder we called it the fuh shou kao—the ointment of long life and prosperity—when with plenty of money, plenty of opium, and, of course, while these lasted, plenty of friends, over the pipe to merry conversation, we drove dull care away. Yes! those were happy days—full of the devil's happiness!" This would come out with biting emphasis. "Aye! we soon found out that, while at night we could rise to joy of the immortal, the sprightliness of the fairy, in the morning—ah! next morning, where were we? Where was the fairy-immortal then? Where our happiness then? From our heaven we felt ourselves cast into hell—a hell of misery and woe.

"Each night it took more of money and

opium to rise to the same height of enjoyment, and each next morning—without the cost of a cash—you felt yourself in a lower hell.

"Houses and lands were being consumed in opium smoke, body and soul shrunk by the bitter drug until the fine gentleman of younger days was becoming a shadow — a dark shadow — what does the colloquial call him? Kwei—kwei—yen kwei—a demon—a demon—an opium demon!

"Then the money grew less and less—but the appetite more and more. Eat less, wear less—but always smoke more and more. Then disease and want—friends no longer crowd you round—but this opium, how it masters you—never for a single day can you put it off—you are fast—fast—bound as with iron chains—bound fast.

"Such was I, ah! such was I—until I heard the message—until I met a man—until I found my Jesus—JESUS—" he would shout, "Jesus delivered me body and soul and now I'm free—I'm free from the net — Satan's net. Now I'm happy indeed. This is the chen kw'ai hoh—true happiness, the chen p'ing an—true peace; not the false

happiness and false peace the devil gives. The former slave of Satan is now without a care or worry"—this with a veritable whoop of triumph as he turned away to help some other troubled, anxious sufferer.

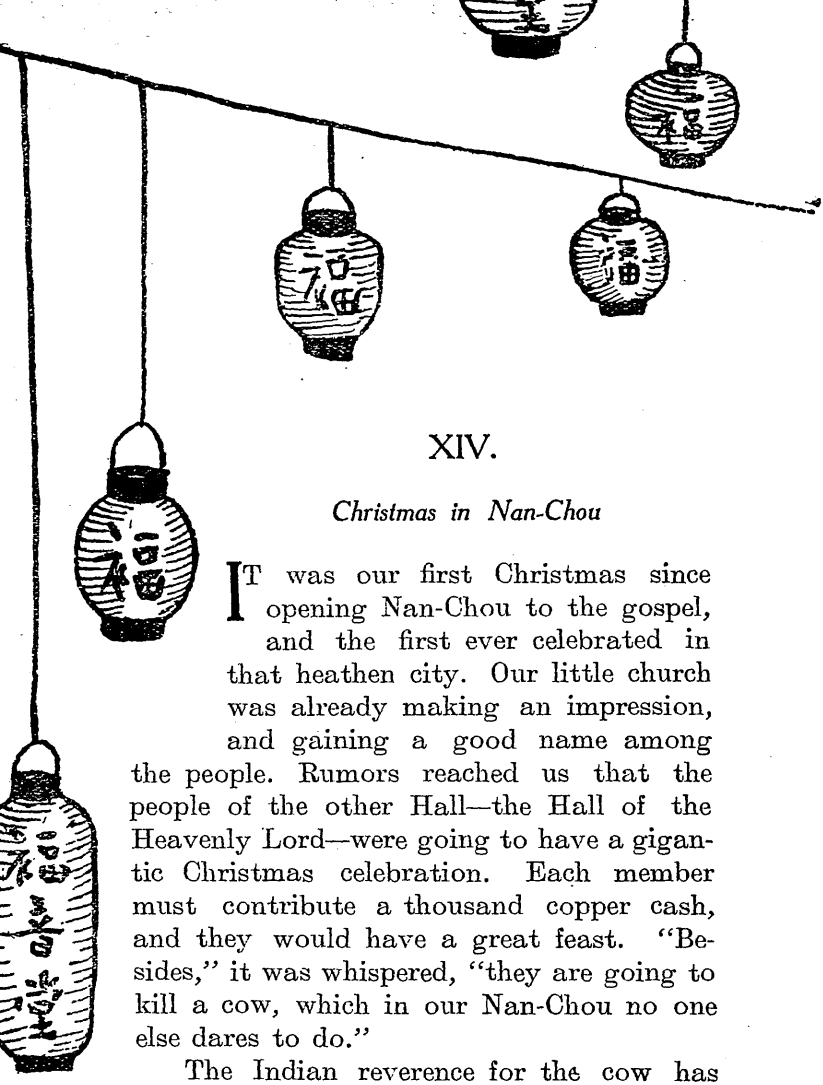
I remember his coming and waking me, one night after midnight, saying that a certain patient was tossing on his bed in terrible agony. Would the teacher mind getting up and joining him in prayer for him? I arose as quickly as I could, and we proceeded to this man's cot, and found him in awful distress.

He had been a ri shih hoh (twenty vial) man, taking an ounce and more of opium a day; and his sufferings were proportionately severe. He complained of pains in his arms and legs—muscular pains—gnawing pains in his bones—and, worst of all, a pain at the heart that was unbearable. In the midst of his agony he would cry out in the Chinese way for his mother or his brother to help him, as he used to do when a little child. Very sympathetically, Cheng told him that we would appeal to God on his behalf, and I remember that we were all in tears even before we began to pray.

Mr. Cheng pleaded with the Heavenly Father on behalf of this poor fellow. God must help, His power was infinite, man's extremity was His opportunity. We all prayed in turn, and then the patient told us he was already very much better, that the pains in his limbs had gone, but there was still pain at his heart. Then—is it strange to tell?—as we sang a translation of "Sweet peace, the gift of God's love," and prayed for a short time longer, he fell asleep.

Medical men will testify that in breaking off the opium habit, sleep is the hardest thing to produce without the use of special drugs. Sometimes, indeed, patients come to us, begging us for something to give them "just a wink of sleep."

Yet here was this man who, under the blessing of God, in answer to prayer, had dropped off into restful sleep. I had prepared four doses of medicine for him to take during the night, but in the morning I found it all on his table. He informed me that the prayer medicine was very much better, and that he did not require the other.



XIV.

Christmas in Nan-Chou

IT was our first Christmas since opening Nan-Chou to the gospel, and the first ever celebrated in that heathen city. Our little church was already making an impression, and gaining a good name among the people. Rumors reached us that the people of the other Hall—the Hall of the Heavenly Lord—were going to have a gigantic Christmas celebration. Each member must contribute a thousand copper cash, and they would have a great feast. "Besides," it was whispered, "they are going to kill a cow, which in our Nan-Chou no one else dares to do."

The Indian reverence for the cow has spread to China. The animal is revered be-

cause it is the "ploughing cow." "Kill the cow that ploughs! Whence then the grain for man and beast?" Buddhist tenets have become not only custom, but law; hence beef is procurable only by those for whom special enactments have been made. There existed no such privilege in Nan-Chou.

One evening, the Gospel Hall people were gathered in the guest hall, where Mr. Cheng, amiable as ever, was entertaining them.

"The Catholics are planning a great feast," said one, feeling his way.

"Subscriptions of a thousand cash each are being collected from their people," added another suggestively.

"They don't fear to break the law—they are going to have beef," said a third, with emphasis.

A fourth remarked: "The whole city knows of it; they are going to have a rehnao—hot racket—time."

Cheng at once took in the situation — the Catholics were going to have a feast, and these Protestant believers were giving him broad hints, lest the Gospel Hall should

fall behind in celebrating the Lord's glorious natal day.

A happy thought came to him. Bringing his fist down upon the table, so that the melon seeds danced and the tea-cups rattled, he exclaimed, "They're going to feast themselves, are they? We'll GIVE a feast—to the poor!"

"Sah! Sah!" echoed the cries of spontaneous and united assent from his hearers, and the plans were made forthwith.

Each man gave as his heart prompted. The vermicelli-dealer, happy old Kwai, whose witness since free from opium the whole street had heard over and over again —in fact they expected him to tell it once more, though it always began and ended with the same surprising phrase, "And it didn't hurt a bit"—Kwai would give a steaming bowl of rice-vermicelli, garnished with salted greens and tempting bits of sliced pork, to each poor person that would come to the Hall and receive, with our blessing, a ticket and a gospel tract.

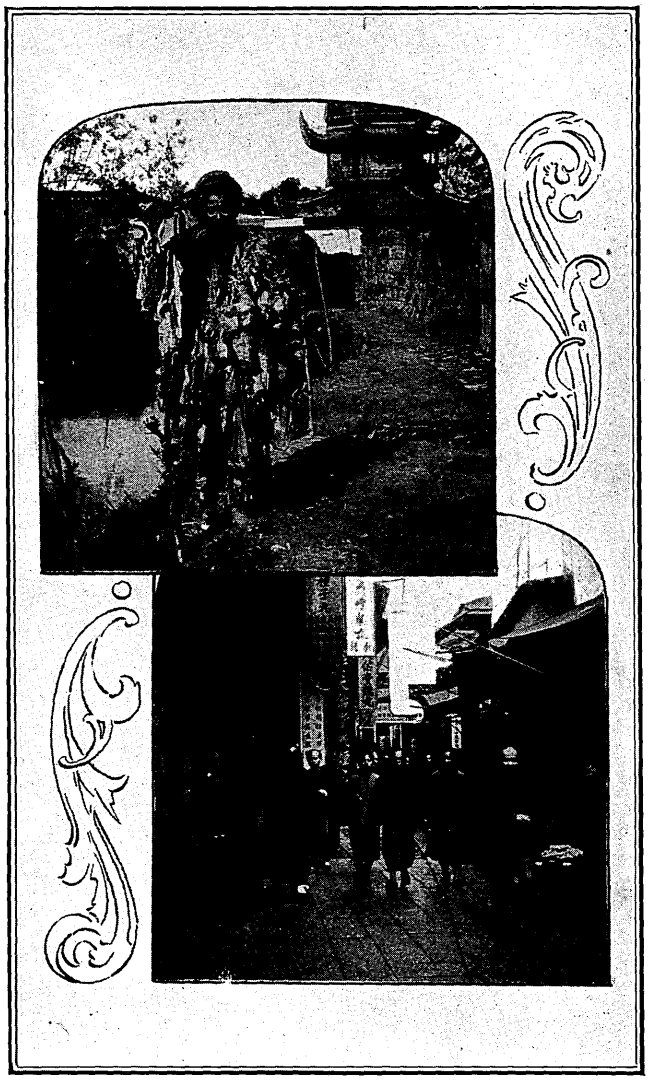
Large posters, announcing this fact, were to be put up on the walls of the city, and Cheng said, slyly, "We'll include enough

on that poster, about the when, where, and why of Jesus' birth, to make it not only an invitation to the poor, but a glad gospel tract to the whole city," and rubbing his hands, he chuckled with glee.

The Hall, too, must be hung with gala red of silk and satin, and colored lanterns in abundance. There was to be, moreover, a large evening meeting.

Christmas Day was a busy but happy day. Assembled in the church, and mutual congratulations over, the members prepared to receive the poor. A pot of dye was prepared and a "Happiness" character written on the hand of each recipient of a meal ticket, to prevent him from coming for a second one. Some washed it off and came again, but the newly washed hands told the tale of deception. With a merry "face saving" laugh to their comrades, they remarked "Hong t'amen puh tao—we can't fool them," and off they jaunted to Mr. Kwai's shop.

The beggars came from their newly built "Ki Mao Tien"—Chicken Feather Temple, a rendezvous and shelter erected for their comfort and better control by the chief manda-



The King of the Beggars

A Fine City Street

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rin, as with pride he had once informed me.

The temple's odd name came in this wise. Chinese beggars are expert sneak thieves ; and many an unsuspecting chicken stretching out its neck for a peck at a passing wheelbarrow of vegetables, finds itself suddenly, and with no time to cackle, grasped by a practised hand, and swept under its captor's shirt into his wide-mouthed trousers. These are at once drawn tight, and — who ever heard a chicken cackle in the dark?

The "chicken lifter" hurries along unnoticed to the Ki Mao Tien, where the freed and now loudly cackling victim is tethered to a bench, to await the boiling of the water. Fear inspires haste, and soon its feathers are drying in the sun ; to be tied, when dry, to a bamboo stick and made into a convenient feather duster for sale ! Hence the name Chicken Feather Temple.

Hundreds of tickets were given away that day—the beggars and others enjoying the accompanying tracts and proudly demonstrating—some of them—their ability to read.

Our evening meeting was crowded ; the posters and the decorations had attracted a

large number of people. Cheng gave us an inspiring talk.

During the service there was a slight interruption. Three men came up the aisle. One was spokesman; another bore several visiting cards, in the large respectful form, while the third held a bunch of fire crackers and some incense sticks. They represented the prison lictors, the lowest and poorest of yamen menials, who live on what they can squeeze out of the prisoners. Indeed, they have all once been prisoners themselves, but have been promoted.

"We come, Great Foreign Pastor, and Teacher Cheng," said the spokesman, "to pay our respects, to worship the Lord, and to participate in the happiness of the day."

They then looked about for a crucifix to bow to, but finding none, were content to bow to each of us, and then gave a sweeping bow to the congregation, who all instinctively rose to receive it—though with a sly smile on many faces.

The fire crackers would have been set off then and there, had someone not secured them in time to avoid an even greater interruption.

Cheng whispered to me, "What they want is tickets !"

"How many—three ?" asked the unsophisticated missionary.

Cheng went to inquire, and came back with a smile. "There are twenty-four in all —only three could be spared to come."

The tickets being given, with more bows the three men retired, and we proceeded with our service. We remembered that the Master Himself had many an interruption in His discourses—and were comforted.

At the close of the service a ticket was given to each of the congregation, and in a body we proceeded to Mr. Kwai's, whose large shop barely accommodated so many. The tables were spread with eight bowls each and eight pairs of chopsticks, grace was sung to the tune of Old Hundred, and the long rice strips were dexterously and rapidly disposed of.

The meal finished, we sang another hymn, and then wended our way homeward, long to remember our first Christmas in Nan-Chou.

光陰似箭

Light and darkness fly like an arrow;

日月如梭

days and months like a weaver's shuttle.

君猶盃也

The Sovereign is the cup,

民猶水也

the people the water;

盃方水方

in a square cup the water is square,

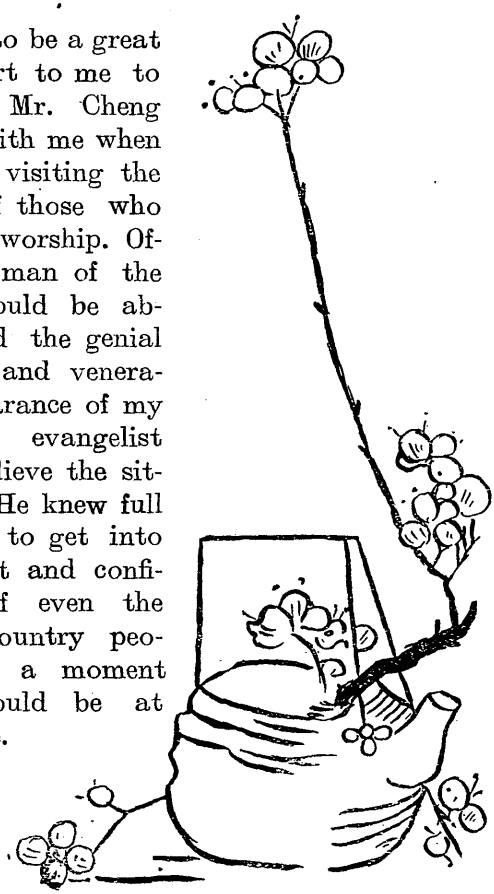
盃圓水圓

in a round cup, it is round.

XV.

Instant in Season, Out of Season

IT used to be a great comfort to me to have Mr. Cheng go out with me when we were visiting the homes of those who came to worship. Often the man of the house would be absent, and the genial presence and venerable appearance of my bearded evangelist would relieve the situation. He knew full well how to get into the heart and confidence of even the simple country people. In a moment they would be at their ease.



Sometimes there would be some little problem before the family, of which at the outset I could not appreciate the difficulty, not understanding all the circumstances, or not having a deep enough insight into the particular Chinese custom involved. But Cheng, with his characteristic knowledge of Chinese life, unusually keen even for a Chinese, would soon get to the very root of the difficulty, and sometimes advise them in quite a different way to that in which they wished to be advised, and in which, at first hearing, I would have thought of advising them. He was a power in pastoral work, and his burning, earnest spirit would always carry him through the difficulties, and bend the will of the people when they themselves would gladly have been persuaded in some other way.

Thus, in that district, numbers of homes were ridden of all idolatry, for he pleaded as few can plead, and showed the utter folly of image worship. He had such high ideals of the power of God to keep, that though they might fear the idols and their friends, he was sure that God was greater than all. He had the faculty of inspiring confidence

in the new God, whom they as yet little understood. They put implicit faith in God because they put implicit faith in him.

On one occasion we spent a few weeks at Shi-Shou, his old home, to let him visit his relatives, and to work up the district.

I accompanied him into the country, and as we drew near his home we passed many people who knew him, and every one seemed surprised to see the vigor with which he walked, and how well he looked. When we stood a moment in conversation with them and they made some remark as to his splendid appearance, he at once joyously replied, attributing it to the power of Jesus, Who had so graciously renewed his health, and Whom he would strongly recommend to them.

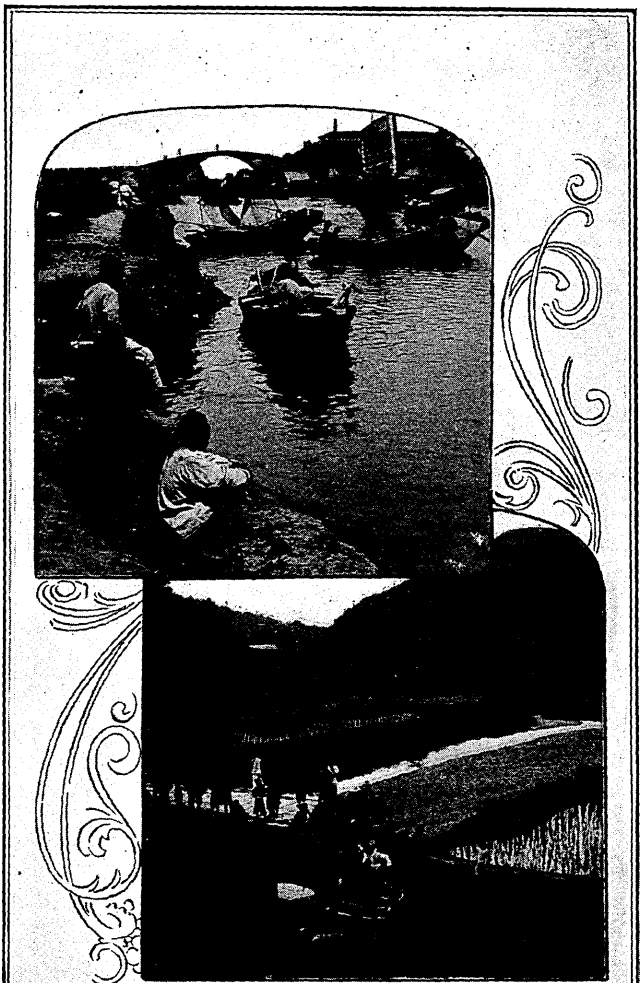
Once we were invited to preach in a tea shop, owned by one of our members. After we had sung a hymn, the large shop filled rapidly, and it was interesting to hear the remarks of those who came in, most of whom knew him. They said, "Is he going to preach to-day? Why, that is the old fellow that used to hobble along with a staff, just a year or so ago. Is not that

Cheng-R-tie of the renowned family at Kwan Shan? How terribly ill he used to look, and how smart he looks now. Well, certainly the Gospel Hall has not done him any harm."

Then the old man rose and addressed them. He said: "I need not introduce myself here, for I am not 'from the north of the Sea, or the south of the Lake,' but a man of your own place, for years living in your own city here. You all remember me under the power of opium and the ravages of a hundred diseases. Why, I was reduced to such a miserable condition that none of you would care to have me around."

Then leaping up and striking his chest he shouted, "But look at me now! My energies are a hundred fold more than they used to be. I have a hundred times the strength I used to have. I have a new lease of life," and he burst into a description of the marvellous grace of God that had wrought in him a change so great.

Mr. Cheng was a very great help to me, not only because of his life of prayer, and intense spirituality, but on account of his classical learning. His custom of intro-



A Canal Scene

Rice Fields

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ducing rich and pertinent passages from the classics to illustrate his teaching, was not only instructive to his audience, but also to the missionary, so that one looked up to him as a teacher in many ways.

As a result of his fine Chinese education he was so able to interest the educated classes, that our church at Nan-Chou soon came to have a better class of adherents than is usual where the work has been but newly begun.

His passion for souls was intense. Let me give an instance. We had spent most of the day on the river, and were making for Shi-Shou in a little rowboat in which we had taken passage.

One of our fellow-passengers was a stranger, though Cheng knew of his antecedents. In less time than it takes to write it, he was engaged in earnest conversation with this stranger concerning the eternal verities. I was amazed at his fervency of spirit. What had produced such sudden and warm interest in a man he had never seen before? He would not let him go.

Once more he told his own experience,

and the man said, "Yes, Mr. Cheng, you have 'eaten much bitterness.' "

"True ! True !" replied Cheng. "But, "sien k'u heo t'ien"—first the bitter, then the sweet—to which proverb he added another of its forms, "k'u tsin t'ien lai"—bitter ended, sweet comes—and as though some sweet morsel were in his mouth, he would laugh with closed lips.

Then he told of the bitterness of the Cross, on which his bitterness had been nailed with that of Jesus, and all the world. "K'u tsin—k'u tsin," he exclaimed—"bitterness ended, bitterness ended—in the Cross for you and me. The peace of forgiveness and cleansing—t'ien ru mih—t'ien ru mih — sweet as honey, sweet as honey," concluding his testimony with a cry that was almost a shout of delight.

I could not help suggesting moderation. "Rest a bit, for we shall have a siege of it to-night."

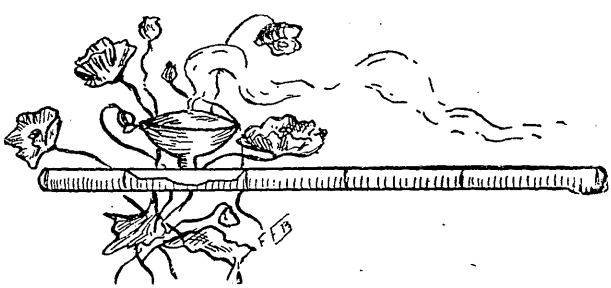
"I am never happy unless I have at least one or two onslaughts such as this every day," he replied. "Yueh chiang, yueh kw'ai hoh—the more I preach, the more happy I am; and besides, they don't

know—" Then he began singing softly to himself his favorite hymn. Soon it aroused us all, and we were singing with might and main. Crossing the lake in that little row-boat, we sang it over and over, to the great enjoyment of our fellow passengers.

When at last we had concluded, Cheng turned to them with a happy laugh, and said: "We have the advantage of you—we have Jesus—we are happier."

They exclaimed, "Yes, you are—tell us about it—sing some more."

Many and appreciative were their remarks. The gospel was being commended to them. They enjoyed it, for there is nothing so infectious as joy.

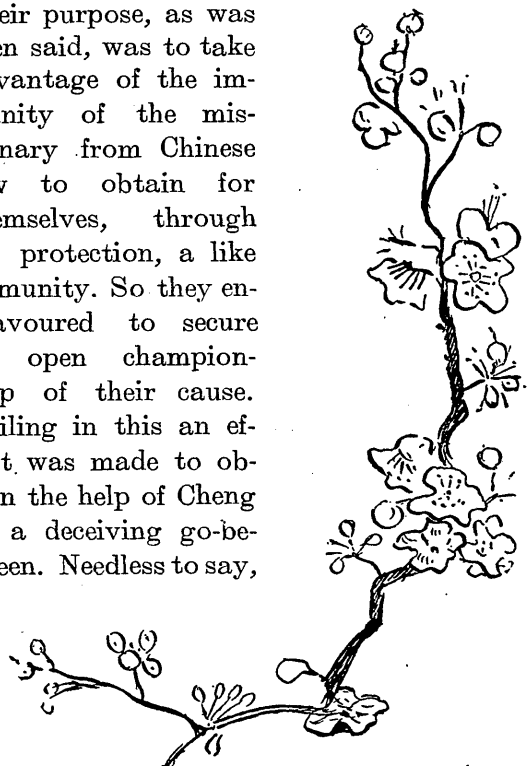


自序 ……一
煙癮之原因 ……二
煙癮之害處 ……三
戒煙之方法 ……十
戒煙之功效 ……五

XVI

Our Church Rules and What the Mandarin Thought of Them

IN a previous chapter the influx of the worst element of the city into our church, at the opening, was mentioned. Their purpose, as was then said, was to take advantage of the immunity of the missionary from Chinese law to obtain for themselves, through his protection, a like immunity. So they endeavoured to secure his open championship of their cause. Failing in this an effort was made to obtain the help of Cheng as a deceiving go-between. Needless to say,



they failed, for Cheng told the wily deputation sent to sound him, that they did not understand the gospel in the least; that we had come to be unto them a savor of life unto life, not of death unto death.

But even so, they were not to be turned aside so easily. In a few days we found it reported on the street that this rowdy element had been received into the membership of "the Gospel Hall of Great Britain." This was to give even greater protection (another term for license) than "the Heavenly Lord Religion of Great France."

On one occasion a gong was beaten along the entire length of the street, announcing a gathering of the "Gospel Hall people" in a large tea-house "to discuss the affairs of their cause." Notice of this gathering was quickly carried to Cheng, who proceeded to the scene and publicly berated these pretended and now crestfallen gospellers.

The methods used by us to rectify this evil were various. Besides carefully stating our position to the gentry and officials, and in public street preaching, we widely dis-

seminated literature dealing with the subject, even to the extent of putting up posters throughout the city. In China these take the place of newspapers; so to enable the public to discriminate between false and true members of the Gospel Hall, we posted up widely the following notice:

"How is a false professor to be distinguished from a real believer? The blatant profession of his own glib lips is of course no criterion; punctilious attendance at all the gospel services is nothing to go by, since our doors are open to anyone; possession of a Bible and hymn-book is not evidence because we sell these freely to all who wish to buy; parading the Gospel Hall lantern with 'Fuh Yin T'ang' inscribed, to designate his adherence to it, is proof against him, for that has been forbidden.

"Perchance some reader suggests, 'Ah, now I know. The home that in the place of idols or ancestral tablet has hung up in it a scroll inscribed with the Ten Commandments—that is the home of a Christian man.' But even this suggestion may be wrong, for the gospel of grace demands more than this.

Here is the mark of distinction: When you see a man whose daily walk shows an uncommon degree of virtue; who, in his business, has but one price and a just scale; whose happy heart and bright face gladden the sorrowing and distressed; whose life shows forth the love of God and the example of Jesus—look closely, for that man is likely to be a member of the Gospel Hall.

But these methods were for the enlightenment of the public. Cheng suggested a simple but effective measure which would test and sift our congregation. This was to be accomplished by placing in each of our churches a list of "Requirements for Catechumens with the names of accepted candidates attached."

The rules were five in number:

1. Three months' study of the Truth. This would enable us to get acquainted with the would-be catechumen to discover whether he had any lawsuit pending, or any other unsettled matters.

2. The putting away of all heterodoxy. This was sweeping in its scope, including idolatry, ancestral worship, and the multitude of such heathen practices as fortune-

telling, divining, geomancy, etc., etc.

3. The ability to reply to questions in four chapters of our catechism.

4. The memorizing of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the names of the books of the New Testament.

5. The strictest abstention from opium, gambling, impurity, intoxicating liquors, and disorderly conduct.

This last was especially directed against the rowdy element. These rules embraced the main sins of China. They were written in large characters on a neatly painted tablet over five feet long by two feet wide, affixed to the wall. This was balanced by a similar tablet on the opposite wall with Requirements for Church Membership.

For three months not a solitary name could be inscribed. We were a close corporation during that time !

Cheng formed a special class to prepare for examination on the five rules. No one who heard him expound these would ever suggest that we were trying to make Christians by rule.

That catechumen board devoid of any name had a tremendous effect. There was

no way of getting round it. Bribing the evangelist would not help matters. If they would have their names on it they must conform to its conditions.

When the gentry came to see us, Cheng would point to the board and say, "We are instructing and exhorting many, but have as yet accepted none."

Several times the injured poor came to us crying out against their oppressors. So-and-So (giving the name) had beaten them or otherwise involved them in trouble. The oppressor had claimed to be a member of the Gospel Hall, so the injured one came clamoring for us to relieve his distress. Who had made us judges and dividers over them? Cheng pointed to the board. "We have no names, you see. Besides, our people don't do such things. You may go to the proper authorities to seek justice, and tell them that So-and-So's claim to belong to us is false, for you have been to our Hall and failed to find his name."

The rowdies who had no thought of reforming began to complain that the rules were too strict. "The gate to the Kingdom is narrow," was Cheng's reply.

Finally examination day came. There was keen interest. Would it be like so many things Chinese—just an outward form after all, with loop-holes large enough for all to slip through ?

Our large inner guest room was used for the occasion. Evangelist Cheng and the pastor occupied the upper seats. A secretary sat close by. Had there been any church members they would have occupied the side seats.

The candidate to be examined sat alone on a chair placed in the centre of the room. We opened with prayer. As presiding officer I enquired as to Rule I—"When did you first come to us to hear the gospel ?" The secretary wrote his reply under his name, age and address. "What does study of the Truth mean ?"

Cheng would then question him, after which we would turn to Rule II. Cheng's questions here were very searching. "In case of death in the family, how would you proceed ?" "Would you erect a tablet, and worship the spirit of the dead ?" "On New Year's morning, when 'all under Heaven' rise early to pray Heaven and the idols for

a prosperous year, how would you proceed ?"

Under Rule III, we readily discovered how much Christian doctrine was really comprehended, by asking the questions out of the regular order and in such a way that memorized answers would not suit.

Thus it proceeded. When all had been examined, a few names were found worthy. But not one of the unrepentant had succeeded through scheming in getting his name on the list.

We were willing to have the accepted names known, for they were our glory and our joy. Cheng rejoiced, for the atmosphere cleared perceptibly. Now it devolved upon us to demonstrate that the gospel could transform men, that it had not lost its power unto salvation to every one that believeth.

I was called on one occasion to attend a member of the chief mandarin's family who was ill. Afterward, as we sat in his spacious audience room, he produced one of our books, and said respectfully : "This has come to my notice. I am interested in your 'Requirements for Catechumens.' "

Chao Ruen Seng, Chief Mandarin of Nan Chou

"Yes," I replied, "we have scattered them far and wide so that the masses may know what we stand for in a general way."

"Well," said he, meditatively, "I don't understand much about the first four rules, but that fifth rule is far-reaching."

He paused a moment and then proceeded: "It seems to me that within a period of ten years, the best people in China will have joined the church."

"How so?" I asked in surprise.

"Because you safe-guard the interests of your people to such a degree," he replied.

"But, your worship," objected I, misunderstanding, "how can you say that? Have we not been in your honorable city for more than a year now, and not once have we appealed to you for protection for our suffering converts? Why, we have had several cases of real distress, when you were waiting to be gracious, but our people preferred to suffer for the sake of establishing our fair name and reputation."

"Ha! Ha!" he laughed. "You misunderstand. That would not be safe-guarding your interests, but the opposite. No, no! What I mean is this. Look at your educa-

tional institutions; they are the finest in the land, teaching as they do the necessary branches of real knowledge. Now, what does a man covet for his children more than the equipment your schools so cheaply provide? Our Government schools cannot compare with them. Then there are your hospitals, under the care of skilled physicians and equipped with all the appliances and comforts that Western science knows. Now what is more precious to a man than his life, and the health of his family? Of course those in the church get the first care."

"No," interrupted I, "we treat all alike."

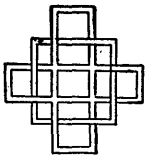
"Then, again, see this list of rules you have," continued the wise old official. "Here are absolute prohibitions of opium, gambling, and impurity. These things in our China are what we parents and officials dread most. They 'pai kia, pai ming'—ruin the family, ruin the reputation. Now, if you are able to safeguard your people from these evils, am I not right in saying our best families will flock into the church!"

It was a blessed opportunity to speak of

Christ, though not the only one by any means, for he enjoyed to talk along these lines. With burning heart I have more than once conversed with him about God, the source of all good, and Jesus Christ, the divine Word, the Expression of all His love.

The example of Cheng's little church in Nan-Chou was supporting these messages. There was a new Light in his city. Was there one in the mandarin's own heart? For one day he said to me, feelingly, "I am tired of official life. One cannot obey the Truth of Heaven and be an official in corrupt China. Besides, I have a presentiment that I shall not live long. I am minded to place my family in the capital, and then I'll go out with you and preach !"

His presentiment came true. He passed away within the year. Where did he go ?



XVII.

Some Strange Inquirers and Converts

"AI-AH!" exclaimed Cheng to me one day, "to save a soul in China is indeed difficult." There are, as a matter of fact, many things to warrant the statement. Apart from the claims of "the three religions" of the people upon them, there are the claims of clan and of society. To join the "foreign religion" is to invite a large measure of ostracism. Women find it

difficult to attend worship because of their bound feet. Opium is the fatal barrier to many an interesting inquirer's progress. Disease and death, so rampant in China, often sweep them away when interest is nicely developing. The power of demons over the people is also a real obstacle, so great is the popular fear of these.

There was a silk merchant from the county of "Heaven's Gate," who was attracted to us by Cheng's preaching. He must have been a man of some ability, for he was the leader of his trade guild, which numbered thirty-five men. Through him they every one decided to join our "Hall," and the necessary books were bought. Their leader in things temporal, he determined to be such in things spiritual. Thus, he read diligently his Bible and hymn-book, and became an eager inquirer after the truth.

My own recollection of him is slight. I was away so much that I seldom saw him. However, Cheng brought him to me on one occasion to get medicine for his child. I remember his grateful smile a day or two afterward, when he announced the baby's recovery. When I returned from my next

trip around my appointments, sad news awaited me. Our newly found friend had taken cholera, through dreadful bungling had been given the wrong medicine, and had died. Their leader gone, most of his thirty-five guildsmen fell away.

Several weeks afterward we were greeted, one day, by an elderly woman, who came to us saying, "I am Peh Yuin's mother. I have come two hundred miles from 'Heaven's Gate' to see my child's grave." Cheng explained to me that Peh Yuin (White Cloud) was the silk merchant's baby name, by which his fond mother still called him. Of course her loved one had been long buried, and being poor she could not take his remains back to the old home as she would have liked to do.

Daily she went to the grave and mourned her son, lamenting loudly and calling to Peh Yuin, sometimes mildly reproving him for not remaining longer to comfort her old age, and then again with tears excusing him. "To be sure, you are not blameworthy. It was fate; and you, Peh Yuin, my son, could not help it." With words like these her weeping was interspersed.

She was a vegetarian by religious faith and practice, but Cheng by faithful preaching persuaded her to break the vow of that cult, and accept Christian teaching. Often he prayed with her. Shortly before her return, we learned from her own lips something like the following : "I like to come to your Hall, for my Peh Yuin liked to come. I do trust what you have said is true, that Jesus can take me where my Peh Yuin is. Do you know, yesterday I went to his grave and burned some paper money for him to use in the nether world. I burned his Bible and hymn-book also, for they tell me he was constantly reading them, and I thought he might want to have them. Oh ! my Peh Yuin! Why did God not let him stay?"

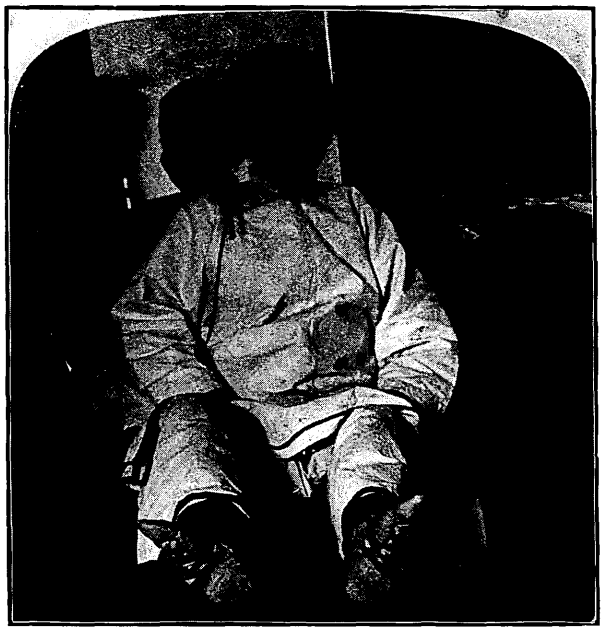
Poor loving, yearning, broken-hearted mother ! Her instincts and motives all so true and tender, her ignorance and superstition still so profound. Picture her standing by that grave she had come so far to mourn over, and burning her boy's loved Bible and hymn-book that he might have them to use in the unseen world to which he had gone. Even human hearts are

touched by such an incident. How much more the loving heart divine !

Cheng gently chid her, and instructed her as lay in his power. And, dear reader, I do trust she found her way to Heaven's Gate, do not you ?

* * * * * * *

Mrs. Ting was tall and pretty, and only nineteen years of age. She had been bought to be the wife of a widower of over fifty, who kept an opium den. Unhappy in her married life, it was easy for her to yield to the seduction of opium, and living in the den itself and not therefore needing to buy the drug, she soon acquired an enormous appetite. Her friend and confidant, Mrs. Yang, eventually brought her to the Gospel Hall to hear the Word of Life. It was far to walk, and her bound feet were too small to bear a large woman's weight such a distance. As soon as she took her seat in the church, she would sit back so as to lift her sore and tired feet off the ground. Having, however, often to relieve her husband of the care of the opium den, she was unable to come regularly. Besides, he was not pleased to have her come at all, for we were in strong opposition to his opium selling, and



Chinese Lady, (Bandages Removed from Feet)

he knew it well. In fact Cheng and I had more than once called on him and urged him to give up the abominable business.

Cheng one day told me the following episode concerning her: Her morning's work had detained her—opium smokers do not rise till late in any case—and she had come to church the entire distance alone. When she arrived, she found that the meeting was already well begun and that the outer gate had been carelessly closed. Fearing to disturb the service to admit just a woman, and footsore from the long tramp, she knelt outside the gate on the ground. There she kept on her knees and worshipped as best she could for perhaps an hour. Who knows the longings that arose in her sad young heart? How could she rise to the sweet, pure life that filled Cheng's Sunday morning message?

When service was over, Cheng found her and brought her in. How our hearts ached for her! So eager to learn—but how was she to come to a knowledge of the truth? Her husband was an opium sot, her home an opium den, herself fast losing her youthful freshness through the withering in-

fluences of the bitter poison that held her in its grasp and blighted all her hopes. She suggested more than once that she would bring an elderly woman to attend her, and remain in our compound while she broke off opium. However, her husband would not consent, and neither could we—in that newly opened station.

At times in prayer for captive ones like Mrs. Ting, I have heard Cheng cry, with broken voice, "Oh ! Lord, they want to come, yet cannot. They are like I was in the years of my bondage. Oh ! Lord, how long ere Thou set them free ?"

* * * * * * *

One of Cheng's inquirers was Hsin, a cloth merchant. He was of the "Heaven's Gate" group, and continued to come even after Peh Yuin died. He brought his boys to the chapel, but Cheng had never been able to get the timid, modest wife and mother to come. Besides, she had little ones and the home to manage and could not easily attend.

One day the father, bearing his little son of two years in his arms, came to the Hall for medicine. The child was already far gone. There were fever, a distended

stomach, and much emaciation. In dark China one sees a great deal of this. The food, especially the vegetables, not being well cooked, nearly every Chinese child suffers much from worms. The stomach becomes swollen to two and three times the natural size, and the suffering child, consumed with fever, and distressed with pain, grows daily more and more thin. Innumerable children die from this trouble alone.

This baby was too weak to bear the only drugs at hand. Next day I was sent for and found, as I expected, that he was dying. The poor mother's grief was evident. How tenderly she held the little one in her arms, relinquishing him, however, at my request as I took him in my own.

To my disgust I saw she had covered the mouth and lips with a mixture of chopped garlic and some other strong-smelling herb. I asked what this was for. The poor anguished mother replied, "It is to coax the worms out of his mouth and nose. Several have already come up. These things are killing my baby boy and I am hoping we can get enough of them up to save him."

There was a little funeral next day—

only one of the "million a month." The grief-stricken parents found a friend in the sympathizing evangelist, counselling, comforting, and pointing to the world to come.

* * * * * * *

Much of China's idol worship is intermixed with spiritualism. Hence the proverb "Shen wu ching puh ling." "If the idol is not possessed of the spirit of some ancient worthy it is not efficient."

In our district there lived a family named Ch'en, in whose home the most efficacious spirit for miles around dwelt with the image, in the niche of the place of worship. This "Lao Yeh" (venerable one), it was reputed, could tell how high the river would rise during the ensuing year. Water, placed before his shrine, would upon his presence being invoked become inspirited and receive healing power. The medium, a poor but educated farmer, would upon yielding himself to the spirit, and thus becoming possessed, stagger about as if drunk. With steel stylus he would then write the spirit's message, with stiff spasmodic strokes, upon a board covered with sand, in the presence of the awed and worshipping people.

During a visit to the city this man came under the influence of the Gospel Hall. Then began a strange conflict between light and darkness in the man's heart. The truth of the one great eternal God, who alone must be worshipped and obeyed, seized hold of him. He told us of his office as medium, and argued in behalf of the reality and power of the spirit of his worship. Cheng did not oppose him on that ground. In fact I have found the majority of Chinese convinced as to the existence of unseen spirits and their power. Cheng held that these were emissaries of Satan, foul demons of the kingdom of darkness, and that reason and the Word of God alike forbade intercourse with them. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

In course of time the medium came to us to break off opium. He stayed three weeks in daily contact with Cheng, whose apostolic zeal and convincing witness finally conquered him. Three weeks of life in the Light as it shone through the preached Word and the example of God's children, and the medium was a changed man. He returned to his country home and announced

his purpose to destroy the image. The people gathered to save it and take it to an adjoining temple. Before it was taken away, however, the medium went to the shrine as had been his custom, and addressed the demon in the old way. He said, "Lao-Yeh, I have been your medium for many years. Now we must part company. I have learned to worship the true God, and that it is wrong to yield oneself up to any other. I dare not serve you any longer."

In this dramatic way ended his vassalage to the powers of darkness. His brother and one or two relatives also became Christians. I have visited his home, and was feasted there on one occasion. By the "expulsive power of a new affection," as exemplified in Cheng's life, the "strong man" was cast out and he received instead the indwelling of the holy God. The Lao Yeh's medium became Christ's freedman. The Truth had made him free.

XVIII.

The Parting

BY and by the exigencies of the work called me to another province. Then came the parting asunder of hearts that had grown closely attached to one another. Together we had suffered, together we had toiled, together we had won the victories of faith. Now separation must come, and I dreaded it greatly. Cheng and I had found the place "where there is neither

Greek, nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all." It was hard to part.

During these last days he would often drop into my room. "What is it?" I would ask, though I knew full well.

"Nothing," he would reply. "I have just come to sit awhile and to chat a little." Then after a short silence, he would begin, "What shall I do when you are gone? Who will there be to counsel with?"

"Why, Cheng, you know Mr. C—— is coming to take over the work, and everyone knows he is a fine man."

"Ah, yes! they are all good," he would say. "But be he ever so good, you are my 'grace man' (en-ren). It was through you my burdens were rolled away. You were not ashamed of my sores. And who nursed me when ill and was father and mother to me? Oh, teacher! this leaving us is hard, hard, hard."

"Come, Cheng, bear up. Is there not a happy meeting time coming soon for us all?"

"Oh, teacher, if it were not for that!

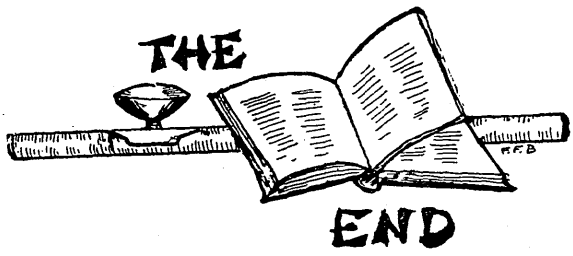
. . . and I shall meet Koh, who, though not baptized, has gone before. I am old now, teacher, I will be there waiting for you ; yes, yes, waiting for you."

There were no intruding eyes. What if I pressed his bearded cheek to my own, as in close embrace love found expression too d. for words ?

* * * * * * *

In northern Hunan between the lake and the Yang-tse, among the people of that wide and populous plain, with the grace of God resting richly upon him, Cheng still labors on, his joy to do the Father's will.

"It is the way the Master went ;
Should not the servant tread it still ?"



Cheng 成

Ting 廷

Chiah 甲

送君千里

Though you escort a friend a thousand li,

終有一別

you must part with him at last.

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